

V PORTRAITS TOWARD A REALIZED POETIC PLAY

BY

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Abstract of Thesis: "V Portraits - Toward a Realized Poetic Play"

My practice-based PhD project entitled, "*V Portraits - Toward a Realized Poetic Play*" will define the 'poetic play', a hybrid form of performative text. This definition will evolve through employing the following methodological question: How can a dialogic practice-based investigation of the hybrid form of the poetic play through the five individual sense modalities assist in the aesthetic situating of, and subsequently the fully realized definition of, the poetic play?

The poetic play is a relatively new form emerging largely in the latter half of the 20th Century out of an experimental tradition that has not been completely developed in discourse. This project will offer context and a definition of the poetic play and then apply a model of analysis to five pieces by different artists. For the practice-based portion, I will explore the methodological question through my original text and five performative realizations in a sequence entitled "Portraits". These original performative pieces will each emphasize one of the five senses in order to establish an aesthetic history of the form and expand the sphere of its performative capabilities through contemporary theory. Expressing the text through various senses and media, brings the poetic play forward into the current social and artistic dialogue.

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LIST OF ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

- 1) "Portraits - Sketches" - text
- 2) "Portraits - Visemes" - sound file
- 3) "Portraits - Distillation" - video
- 4) "Portraits - Scoring" - video documentation; photographic documentation
- 5) "Portraits - Captions" - text
- 6) "Portraits - Memory" - video documentation; photographic documentation
- 7) "Portraits - Dendritic" - photographic documentation

Dedication

My heartfelt thanks to my supervisory team, Tim Atkins, Kate Hodgkin, and Dominic Hingorani for their excellent support throughout. I feel very fortunate to have been surrounded by too many dear colleagues, such as my mentor at Naropa, Reed Bye, and friends, including my partner, to count who have helped me along the way. Deep gratitude goes out to my family, especially my parents and twin, for making this project possible.

Preface To "V Portraits: Toward a Realized Poetic Play"

Before you lies the thesis, "V Portraits: Toward a Realized Poetic Play", which is a practice-based PhD in poetics and performance. It has been written to fulfill the graduation requirements of the English program at the University of East London. I was engaged in writing this thesis from January of 2012 through Spring of 2017.

The inspiration for this project came to me while working to complete my MFA at Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. My supervisor, Reed Bye introduced me to a new form called the 'poetic play' and recommended I continue working to practice in and contextualize it. Naropa is a hub of avant-garde practice and scholarship in the U.S. and houses many of the most cutting edge practitioners of the Beat Lineage. It is an incubator of artistic community and innovation, and it is where I discovered how far the work can go and what it can do in the creative and social landscape.

Through developing personal relationships with mentors and peers and extensive research, I have been able to root out sources and examples of a form that I argue exists in its own right. I have been able to collect a long list of works, which I intend to put into an anthology of poetic plays after having completed this thesis, and I have analyzed five works in this thesis that could be argued to be poetic plays to a great extent. It is possible to analyze these works on the page, however, the poetic play arrived at my doorstep as a palimpsest with its performative capabilities relatively unexplored to the extent possible in the contemporary landscape. For this reason, I have taken the form of the poetic play through an expansive investigation by expressing my own original text as a starting point

in five performative realizations. This I did in order to come to as broad a working definition as possible of what the form can be.

I hope you will enjoy your reading.

Chapter 1 - Definition of the Poetic Play

"V Portraits - Toward a Realized Poetic Play" is a practice-based exploration and definition of the poetic play. The poetic play is a hybrid form or genre of performative text. Performative texts are texts which imply physicality, and hybrid forms are dialogically created new categories or subsets of work. The dialogic approach allows the autonomy of two or more forms to remain intact, maintaining their essential elements while exchanging in dialogue to combine elements meaningfully into an entirely new form.

My project's methodology is to investigate the aesthetics, or sensory experience and history, of the poetic play in order to expand the understanding of what this hybrid form is and subsequently come to a realized definition of the form. Specifically, my methodological inquiry is stated as, 'How can a dialogic practice-based investigation of the hybrid form of the poetic play through the five individual sense modalities contribute to the aesthetic situating of, and subsequently the fully realized definition of, the poetic play?' Practicing in the form myself by creating a text and five performances of the text, in a series of creative iterations entitled, "Portraits", broadens the parameters of what the form can do and fills it in as well as making it more immediately accessible.

This method addresses the task of defining and situating an artistic form within the academic discourse. The poetic play has historically been an avant-garde form, which developed in the U.S. within poetic movements and communities centered in New York, Boston, and San Francisco. In seeking to define the form of poetic play, which is a specific form, the influences of the poetic play must be explored.

To begin the discussion of the influences that shaped the current poetic play, first it is helpful to address Gertrude Stein's innovation of the form of the play. Following Gertrude Stein's influence, my investigation traces the emergence of the poetic play, which comes largely out of a tradition of innovative post-war American poets and artists associated with the Beats in the New York and San Francisco Schools of poetry as well as with those of the Fluxus movement. These movements included Poets Theater and Fluxus and constituted what the Beat poet and co-founder of Naropa University and the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, Anne Waldman, has called the 'Outsider Tradition'. The historically avant-garde nature of the form situates it outside of the mainstream and causes it to be traceable predominantly through largely marginalized and underground streams. This means that the discourse surrounding the form of the poetic play is obscure, if existent, and that in order to define and contextualize the form, it is necessary to begin where there is discussion, more at root levels of theories of representation and form as well as in terms of the history of social art evolution.

From this theoretical foundation, the artists whose creative work will be analyzed in order to investigate the poetic play form include Gertrude Stein, a matron of the Modernist Paris arts scene of the early 20th Century; Samuel Beckett, an Irish avant-garde novelist, play write, theater director, and poet, who is considered one of the last Modernists; Federico Garcia Lorca, a Spanish poet, playwright, and theater director; Frank O'Hara of the Post-WWII New York School of poets and artists; and Leslie Scalapino of the late 1960's and early 1970's San Francisco School L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets. Additionally, due to the relatively new development of the form, discourse regarding the form of the poetic play and it's definition in the context of

other related forms comes largely from interviews I conducted with current key practitioners in the field, including, Kevin Killian of the Bay Area Poets Theater; Reed Bye, a Beat poet from out of Naropa; Anselm Berrigan, a poet of the Beat Lineage and of the New York School; Vanessa Place, a forerunner of Conceptual Writing based out of L.A.; and Fiona Templeton, a contemporary British text and performance artist practicing in both the UK and U.S.

To better understand the context, the artistic field or landscape of forms must be explored, beginning with the category of 'performative texts'. This is a broad, general term under which there are many sub-genres or forms with more specific criteria, one of which is Poets Theater. In 2010 an anthology of Poets Theater was published, which was edited by Kevin Killian who is one of the pre-eminent figures in the field of Poets Theater having been an active member of the San Francisco school of poets and artists for decades. Under the umbrella of Poets Theater is an even more specific genre or form, called the poetic play. In my interview with Kevin Killian in August of 2012, he states that "a poetic play is one that is a hybrid, part play, and part poem, like the old masques..., a work of Poets Theater is a play written by a poet."¹

The 'poetic play' is a term that has been used in certain circles² for an avant-garde, text-based hybrid form of poetry and drama art, which is a combination of the poem and the play. In my interview in October of 2012 with Reed Bye, a Beat poet who has practiced in the form amongst many of his close peers as well as teaching the form at

¹ See Appendix for full interview with Kevin Killian

² Namely the avant garde in the U.S., particularly within what is now Naropa University and the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics

Naropa University, cited the artist Gertrude Stein as the "earliest single influence on what we at Naropa anyway have been calling poet's or poetic plays, ones that aren't specifically written for characters in any kind of realistic performance. It is slippery and, like all genres, Modernists took them up and turned them in new ways."³ Bye also stated of the form, that "in terms of chronology, Stein's more or less mid-career work with the dialogic "play" form where "things" (mental or physical or linguistic) talk with each other as a way of poetic composition is an early 'very radical' body of work in this form." To add to Reed's definition, Anselm Berrigan, who is another Beat poet and recently the long-time director of the home of the New York School of poetry, the St. Marks Church Poetry Project, described the "poetic play" or "poet's play" in my interview with him in February of 2013 as being possibly "more in line with independent (single) writers taking on the play as an explosive imaginative form in which things could be done quickly through dialogue and characterization and setting wherein the structure was much more to the point than the idea of actually staging the work."⁴

Once named, an understanding of the poetic play form can be gained through seeing it as a field where the elements of the poem and the play blend. The way in which they blend is determined by the theme that is central to the form as it takes shape. This theme can also be described as the 'difficulty', which is a term Stein uses to describe the motivating factor for the innovation of form, or 'idea' as described by Hegel. To understand more in-depth how this happens, we must look at what elements comprise the

³ See Appendix for full interview with Reed Bye

⁴ See Appendix for full interview with Anselm Berrigan

landscape of each of the sub- or contributing forms, namely the poem and the play, that congeal into the hybrid form and how they all relate.

Breaking it down further, the elements involved in this hybrid form of the poetic play on a more fundamental level are the respective elements that form the poem and the play. When attempting to define these forms, it becomes apparent just how many ways each form can be interpreted. The poem, for instance, according to a dialogue between Socrates and Theaetetus as quoted by Jacques Roubaud in *Poetry, etcetera: Cleaning House*, may be seen as follows:

Socrates: What is poetry?

Theaetetus: It is made of this and that.

Socrates: The question, li'l Theaetetus, is not what poetry is made of nor how much poetry there is, the question is "what is poetry?"

Theaetetus: Poetry (Roubaud, 2005).

Historically the form of the poem is inclusive of elements such as: rhyme, meter, spacing, the line, and use of linguistics in the creation of meaning. These elements are the building blocks that comprise the various styles of poetry. Of course insinuated within the form of the poem are two branches or essential parts, namely the poem as it exists on the page as text and the poem as it is read or performed.

The other hand of the hybrid, the play, can also be seen as consisting of certain elements such as character, space or set, dialogue, time, stage directions, narration and language both on the page as theatrical score text as well as existing in it's dramatic communication in the performance of the play. These elemental forms of the poem and the play are available within the extended palate or field of the hybrid and when combined give the hybrid form an expanded dexterity of meaning in creative expression.

Due to the unique effect of the combinations created amongst the poetic play's contributing forms of the poem and the play, the poetic play has one resultant element of overarching importance in determining the form. This determining element is the poetic play's inherent self-referentiality.

This self-referentiality is represented well in the newly emerging field of Conceptual Writing. According to Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman in their seminal book defining Conceptual Writing, *Notes on Conceptualisms*, which came out in 2009, "Conceptual writing mediates between the written object (which may or may not be a text) and the meaning of the object by framing the writing as a figural object to be narrates" (Place, 2009). The conceptual is a form which is complete unto itself and points outside of itself in allegory for contextualization and hence for meaning. This allegorical meaning could also be called self-referential and may hold the space of the most determinant elemental form of the hybrid of the poetic play.

In the poetic play, the self-referential element is made apparent on a few levels, including the thematic, which is by way of using its own combined elements in the creative expression of meaning within the form. This creative expression can be called the 'hybrid dialogic', in which the hybrid form of the poetic play speaks to itself in dialogue within its own hybridity, amongst its hybrid contributing forms. Another level on which the poetic play is self-referential is that it is semantically in context with the forms of its greater landscape in the 'idea' and in the arts within the social discourse in its use of signs. It is crucial when generating hybrid forms to acknowledge and work with each contributing form as an autonomous entity that exists in its own right. Each of these forms is comprised of its own elements that characterize it as that genre or form. It is

important not to allow one form to be merely co-opted into another. As Vanessa Place, states in my interview with her in September of 2012 on the topic of Conceptual Writing and hybridity, "Hybridity has always been with us, don't you think? The danger is that in the rush to amalgamate, we simply assimilate."⁵ In terms of the Conceptual Writing arena, Place, stated in the same interview, when asked "who's work would [she] name as major influences in developing your ideas of Conceptual Writing," that she would name, "Kenneth Goldsmith, Robert Fitterman, Marcel Duchamp, Lee Lozano, Hannah Darboven, Andy Warhol, Carolyn Walker Bynum, Sherrie Levine, Kim Rosenfield, Jacques Lacan. At this time."

Identifying the poetic play in its contextual relationships to its influences helps to define it. To further identify what it is, the arrival at the poetic play is an endeavor of bringing the page to life, of vitalizing the word or of understanding the vitalization of the word. Robert Grenier, a post WWII poet, who has been called a Language poet, but who has referred to himself as a Nature poet because he desires to bring language, through bridging the signifier and the signified, into reality, emphasizes the materiality of language and the real actual present much as did Stein and Mikhail Bakhtin, a 20th Century Russian philosopher and literary critic. This emphasis on the chronotopic, or time and space, in form is crucial when examining the translation between parts of language and elements of hybridity in dialogue and across platforms of representation and reality.

Defining the poetic play requires establishing some measure. First, it is helpful to observe the field of possibility for the form, the framework of which is drawn by the

⁵ See Appendix for full interview with Vanessa Place

essential elements at play within a work. In determining which works occupy the form, it must be asked to what extent is each piece is a poetic play, why or how is it a poetic play, by which standards, and based on the presence of what elements? In other words, what kind of a poetic play is each work and how does the body of works create a contextual or relative definition of the form? To reiterate, the form of the poetic play is a hybrid form combining the poem and the play using conceptual elements. It is a form that has been relatively newly generated by innovations and influences of the 20th Century approaching its current state and finally being recognized sparsely in the latter half of the 20th Century. It has not yet been fully explored, and I am working to define it through my practice-based methodology.

Alongside historical investigation and close reading of performative texts, my creative practice in the form serves to contextualize key terms and concepts such as Gertrude Stein's notion of the innovation of form through addressing 'difficulties', as well as my own term for the structure of the form and my methodology, namely the 'active frame' representative of a dialogic approach to hybridity This practice involves a process of generating a fulfilled or expanded poetic play by beginning with a pre-text and generating five performative realizations.

I am investigating the aesthetics of the poetic play by writing and realizing my own piece in the form beginning with the original raw text called a 'pre-text', according to Conceptual Writing standards championed by Vanessa Place, followed by a series of five realizations. Each of the five realizations is through one of the five sense modalities. The project consists of five interconnected transformative performative iterations of an original poetic play, which explores the overarching theme of Nationalism. The iterations

stem from the original text, or pre-text, as a continuing narrative process, a dialogue which Vanessa Place calls in *Conceptual Writing*, 'allegory'. According to Place, "pre-textual associations assume post-textual understandings" (Place, 2009). These realizations or iterations are the seesawing, back and forth of one after another. They are a dialogue of the methodological investigation of the form of the poetic play.

Gertrude Stein is a starting point for a discussion contextualizing the form of the poetic play. She was one of the most innovative practitioners of language and performative form. In her essay entitled, "Plays," Stein deduces what is actual in terms of the notion of the real, art, and form or genre. She does this by giving a comparison and an exploration of various aspects of reality, or the actual present, and art in order to determine the similarities and differences between what is real and what is art to determine primarily what is actually real and what is art, and within art, among the forms, what is text, what is performance, and what are their capabilities? Through Stein's experience and observation, she explores in her lecture how the real leads into the performance, or is in relationship with performance. She states this precept succinctly in her assertion that, "The business of Art as I tried to explain in 'Composition as Explanation' is to live in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present (Stein, 1976).

According to Stein's theory about and ground breaking work in language and performance design in which she was one of the first to do work that leapt forward into the field we are currently working to define as the form of the poetic play, she brought poetic language and its creative expression closer to the complete actual present by

innovating the form of art she was using into a closer representation of reality that more closely expresses the complete actual present.

This delivery of language into the present arrives by way of its own form. This form is a hybrid, which is inclusive of the elements of the poem and the play both on and off of the page. It is a self-referential framework of representation and expression, of signifier and signified, of sign and performance both in the actual language being used on the page and in the expression of the score in performance. The forms that are melded into a hybrid are each deconstructed to the extent that only the elements that indicated their former shape and implications remain. These can be identified in the new piece of art that is created from their elements. This new vehicle of creative expression is one that uses temporal and spatial elements to translate the real actual present. The translation occurs around the gravitational orientation of a theme unique to each piece so that meaning is generated or delivered regarding that theme.

The framework of the poetic play at large, as I am working from within it to define it, is a form of dialogue using language customary to poetry and plays realized through platforms of expression such as staging, sound, vocalization, photography, video, installation, movement, sculpture, drawing, and experience of the senses of taste and smell. The performative capability of the expression of this creative language is unlimited where it is inclusive of a subject. The subject in my methodology of exploring the performative aspect of this hybrid is present through various relationships with the senses of the subject who can be artist, performer, and audience depending on which phase of the iterations is being focused on, witnessed, generated, documented, or translated at that

moment in time and space. In this way, the form of the poetic play is rooted in the complete actual present.

Stein illustrates the transformation of the form of the play that was established when she began working with it and her subsequent integration of landscape into the form through her experience. In her essay, "Plays", she states of her experience spending her summers in Bilignin in the department of Ain, "there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape. I slowly came to feel that since the landscape was the thing, I had tried to write it down in Lucy Church Amiably and I did but I wanted it even more really, in short I found that since the landscape was the thing, a play was a thing and I went on writing plays a great many plays. The landscape at Bilignin so completely made a play that I wrote quantities of plays" (Stein, 1992). Stein's innovation of form addresses inherent difficulties she encountered within the form in which she was working. She explores the form of the play by addressing the historical anxiety produced in the audience due to a disjunction of differing frameworks of temporal reality between the audience in their seats and in the performance of the play. Alternatively, by conceiving of the play as an inclusive landscape, she eliminates the emphasis on an objective story and the separation between character and audience. She creates a more complete objective and subjective theatrical landscape within which the audience is able to gain experience, thus familiarity, and therefore to eliminate the anxiety of difference.⁶

⁶ See Appendix for my full analysis of Stein's essay, "Plays"

Methodology and Key Terms:

My methodology is in dialogue with Stein's in that I am also investigating and innovating form through difficulties. In the case of the form into which I'm inquiring, often difficulties become the themes around which the elements comprising each of the forms of the hybrid gravitate in order to generate the new third form, which is a poetic play.

First of all it should be asked what a 'form' is. Where does our notion of what constitutes a form originate and where does it lead? In investigating the capabilities of a particular form, it is helpful to begin with a definition of the concept of form itself. A form is what is complete unto itself. It is a relative piece, a context, and a language that speaks in its own terms.

Plato's notion of 'two worlds' regarding the relativity of all forms begins a discussion of contextualizing the forms more specific to my project, which are the forms of art. The philosophical underpinnings of these are well described in *Hegel's Lectures on Aesthetics* as he leads from the general symbolic to the classic ideal to romantic forms of art. Of these romantic forms he names the individual forms of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. Although, having arrived at it at last, it is poetry that he believes is, as an art form, the utmost "world of actualised beauty. The content of this world is the beautiful, and the true beautiful; as we saw, is spiritual being in concrete shape, the Ideal, or more closely looked at, the absolute mind, and the truth itself" (Hegel, 1886).

It is this particular art of poetry that is exemplary of this actualized beauty, and beauty being realized as an ideal is more specifically what he conceives of as what constitutes "The arts, then, of which form and content exalt themselves to ideality" (Hegel, 1886). It is poetry that "is conformable to all types of the beautiful, and extends over them all, because the artistic imagination is its proper medium and imagination is essential to every product that belongs to the beautiful, whatever its type may be" (Hegel, 1886).

Just as Hegel's notion of the 'Ideal' constitutes the expression of the clear idea in its fitting material form, which then is a realized form and equals beauty, Roland Barthes' posits his notion of 'Significance' in *Image, Music, Text*. From Barthes' point of view, significance then becomes a state of realization of the form and "is thus precisely a work: not the work by which the (intact and exterior) subject might try to master the language (as, for example, by a work of style), but that radical work (leaving nothing intact) through which the subject explores - entering, not observing - how the language works and undoes him or her" (Barthes, 1977). So the importance of the relationship between form and content or further between context and platform is again reinforced as giving meaning or significance.

Contributing to the notion of the poetic form, the language which comprises poetry extends from the sign, which is a form in a condensed state, out to the further context of the sign within the form of the sentence, and so on out into its various forms and expressions, and further into the relationship of its forms of expression with each other. This relationship of the forms of expression could also be seen as a form in and of itself, namely 'discourse'. Barthes discusses this relationship by stating that discourse,

being a form in and of itself, "must naturally form the object of a second linguistics" (Barthes, 1977). Barthes goes on to say, that "although constituting an autonomous object, discourse must be studied from the basis of linguistics....a similar formal organization orders all semiotic systems....A discourse is a long "sentence" (the units of which are not necessarily sentences), just as a sentence, allowing for certain specification, is a short "discourse" (Barthes, 1977).

As the field of form becomes more expansive and distinguished, it becomes apparent that there is a conversation of forms taking place. Barthes states that the text has plurality of meaning, and that it is disseminated in its content into a relative context. He claims, "The Text's plurality does not depend on its ambiguity of its contexts, but rather on what could be called the *stereographic plurality* of the signifiers that weave it (etymologically the text is a cloth; *textus*, from which text derives, means "woven" (Barthes, 1979).

From here Peter Quarterman's *Disjunctive Poetics* presents the idea that the text in "the form of poetry, is an object" (Quarterman, 1992). Quarterman's focus is on the works of those whose "central insistence is on the autonomous nature of the poem as part of an indeterminate physical and socioeconomic world" (Quarterman, 1992). This offers the broader implications of viewing the poem as an object in relationship with other forms. This is in line with the Objectivists such as William Carlos Williams who said that Objectivist writing, "recognizes the poem, apart from its meaning, to be an object to be dealt with as such" (Quarterman, 1992). A chief Objectivist, George Oppen is cited as, "calling it 'making an object of the poem'", and said that this identification "really means...the necessity....for achieving form" (Quarterman, 1992). Quarterman continues

with his argument for the poem being an object in suggesting that "To call a poem an object is not to see it in the traditional art sense of "masterpiece": aloof, irreproachable, transcendent, separate from our lives; but to see it as an autonomous object, an identifiable thing that we can look at out there in the world, and respond to - much, perhaps, as we might respond to a chair or a desk: something of use, but something whose existence is nevertheless independent of or goes beyond its use" (Quarterman, 1992).

Although Quarterman makes an argument for the poem being an object, he also asserts that this definition of the poem as an object is problematic as it does not account for the content of the poem. So how does the text go beyond its use? To address that question, it is helpful to begin with Stein's statement that "You have to do something else to continue" (Quarterman, 1992). Quarterman answers by following her statement with his assertion "That 'something else' is the cognitive act, the verbalizing act, even (as Aristotelians might put it, in opposition perhaps to Spicer) a processual mimesis. To attend to the poem rather than to what is outside it (but the distinctions of inner and outer are blurred) is to engage in the interaction of perceiver / thinker / poet / reader with object / poem, and such interaction is always problematic" (Quarterman, 1992).

Another way of addressing this challenge of doing something new to continue is brought forward again in Quarterman's critique when he cites "Olson's much-quoted insistence that 'one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception'" (Quarterman, 1992). Additionally, it is noted that Stein herself addresses her own challenge when she asks, "What is all the rest, beyond that language" (Quarterman, 1992)? Quarterman explains that by this statement, Stein "problematizes her texts to undo

the preconceptions and to render cultural baggage inappropriate, for what is heard is not a paraphrasable meaning (language is not transparent) but a variety of processes by which meaning is achieved" (Quartermann, 1992).

Something else that allows the text to continue beyond its use is something that Gertrude Stein finds through being in dialogue with her own questions and assertions regarding text. She addresses the difficulties she finds in her investigation of text through practice. Her methodology of addressing a series of difficulties as agents of inquiry through her work leads her through her practice of writing in the form in which she was working at the time of the inception of her investigation, namely what was at that time understood to be the form of the play. My investigation is in dialogue with Stein's in the endeavor to expand the field of performative texts on the page and into the landscape.

Forms exist within landscapes or frameworks of reality. A landscape can be a frame around a physical section of reality or it can be a conceptual lens to view reality through. The concept of landscape is used in many disciplines and for many purposes. For the purpose of exploring the evolution of the poetic play landscape, Gertrude Stein can be cited as the first person to explore the possibility of the play as a landscape in which the audience is included. She states in her essay entitled, "Plays", "that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. You may have to make acquaintance with it, but it does not with you, it is there and so the play being written the relation between you at any time is so exactly that that it is of no importance unless you look at it" (Stein, 1976). In her essay, she uses a series of difficulties between the artist, work of art, and audience as

focal points to lead her through her practice of writing in the form of the play where the form of the play is the landscape.

Just as the play is conceived of by Stein as a landscape, the landscape is itself a form and is itself constituted of forms. All forms are anything with an identifiable boundary that encapsulates it and includes a relative language that gives meaning within itself. While a landscape consists of forms, which have been forged in theory and practice, it is noted in *Landscape Interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscape* by Hannes Palang and Gary Fry that "although landscape as a concept already implies interdisciplinarity, its study rarely achieves levels of theoretical integration" (Palang, 2003). The study of landscape has been varied. One approach to landscape is to see it as a method of linking elements as Palang and Fry note in stating, "the main argument for combining several methods is the need for us to understand the relationships and interactions between the mental and material landscapes" (Palang, 2003).

These arguments begin to demonstrate the links between forms and the value of a conceptual container for these relational links. Further approaches to the study of landscape include, "two ways in which landscape was studied (~in the 1960's resurrection of term) by means of historical and interpretive methods in humanistic geography. The first examined the visual and material details of landscape....the second examined cultural perceptions and visual preferences, aiming at understanding people's cognition of and response to their environment" (Palang, 2003). In addition, there can be, "nine directions that further landscape studies have taken: landscape as ecological artifact; landscape as evidence for origins and diffusion; landscape as material culture; urban landscapes; art, literature and landscape meaning; landscape as visual resource;

landscape as ideology; landscape's role in the production and maintenance of social categories; and landscape as text, symbols and signs" (Palang, 2003).

It is problematic to define what is meant by landscape due to its covering such a large swath of discourse. The breadth of the landscape discourse is demonstrated when Malcolm Andrews states in *Landscape and Western Art*, "Landscape is a cultural reading that renews the concrete space and what surrounds us", the landscape designer Bernard Lassus has remarked. Landscape as a perceived version of the natural world is reconstructed to correspond to human needs to the changing living circumstances we experience" (Andrews, 2000). According to *Landscape Interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes*, this breadth of approaches speaks to the application of landscape in that "the term has been used too long and in too many ways to be radically revised. Furthermore, a receptive lay audience awaits our writings about landscape because it strikes intuitive chords about the visual and material environment. A seductive ambiguity provides hospitable refuge for our curiosity about human-environmental interactions. This conceptual conviviality is at once an asset and a liability" (Palang, 2003). Despite the general ambiguity of definition, "Rules and conventions have been developed from painting, theatre and gardening to create a 'discourse' of landscape which has been communicated and debated across Europe through original and reproduced works of artists and signers, and in theoretical writings on landscape" (Palang, 2003).

However it is conceived, within the landscape, there are forms. In contemporary society the multitude of these forms increase, and so also, there are relationships between them and associations made. These relationships between forms can take the shape of hybrid forms that develop within the social and artistic frameworks.

'Hybrid' refers to identifying the mixing of aspects from multiple forms, which produces new distinctions including 'The New (HY) BREED'⁷ or a working definition of what has become understood as the 'hybrid' form of poetics. According to Swenson, "The hybrid poem has selectively inherited traits from both of the principle paths outlined above. It shares affinities with what Ron Silliman has termed "third wave poetics" and with what is increasingly known as "post-avant" work, though its range is broader, particularly at the more conservative end of its continuum" (Swenson, 2009). Furthermore, regarding a definition of hybridity, it is highly adaptable, "depending on what aspects are used to draw from given the conventions of the forms at play, the hybrid poets access a wealth of tools, each one of which can change dramatically depending on how it's combined with others and the particular role it plays in the composition" (Swenson, 2009).

Hybridity is not a new idea and hybrid poetics do not have to be considered entirely champions of the new, as this is not actually even entirely possible while there are the preceding forms among us. In terms of a context and continued history, it is the case, according to Swenson, that "Hybrid poems often honor the avant-garde mandate to renew the forms and expand the boundaries of poetry - thereby increasing the expressive potential of language itself - while also remaining committed to the emotional spectra of lived experience. As different as these two goals might seem, they're both essentially social in nature and recognize a social obligation; and as such, they demonstrate poetry's continued relevance" (Swenson, 2009).

⁷ Swenson, Cole and David St. John, ed., *American Hybrid - A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, p. xxi

Poetry must be reflective of the ways of thinking and subsequently of the language of its time. In this way, poetry is the voice of the people. It is made for, and by, the people of a given social time and place in a specific and broad sense. In this way, hybrid poetry is relevant. Hybrid poetry has contemporary capability in that "Hybrid poetry speaks out, but in ways that avoid echoing the canned speech of that has become so prevalent in this age in which fewer and fewer people control more and more of the media. While political issues may or may not be the ostensible subject of hybrid work, the political is always there, inherent in the commitment to use language in new ways that yet remain audible and comprehensible to the population at large" (Swenson, 2009).

Hybrid poetry is not a hierarchical bully, it is dialogic and hence its forms are autonomous, and, as parts of the whole held together in an autonomous and reciprocating dialogue, its complete hybridity is a social and artistic dialogic ideal. The hybrid form has much potential. As Swenson states, "The most compelling new poets today draw from a vast and wildly varied reservoir of resources. Their choices concerning "voice" and stylistic possibility (as well as their attitudes toward aesthetic, theoretical, cultural, and political urgencies) are now articulated as compelling hybridizations" (Swenson, p.xxviii). In this way, the poetic forms expand and move forward into the current social and artistic landscape.

Vanessa Place, when asked in my recent interview with her how she would define hybridity, responded that it is "In the original sense, a combination of species with allegorical properties. Often partially human, partially nonhuman." Another crucial aspect of the hybrid form is the way in which it comes together and acts within itself in

its combination of parts as well as how it might interact with other forms within the social and artistic landscape. This hybrid activity is crucially one of autonomous dialogue.

From the broad field of performative writing emerges a discourse, a conversation of forms, and this conversation requires communication between forms as much as the material of the forms. Elizabeth Grosz, in *Themes in Contemporary Art*, illustrates this communication of the 'In-between' when she asserts that "the space of the in-between is that which is not a space, a space without boundaries of its own, which takes on and receives itself, its form, from the outside, which is not its outside (this would imply that it has a form) but whose form is the outside of the identity, not just of an other (for that would reduce the in-between to the role of object, not of space) but of others, whose relations of positivity define, by default, the space that is constituted as in-between" (Grosz, 2001). Hybridity is evocative, and inherently inclusive, of both the forms and the spaces between the forms. These forms can be textual as well as social and are in conversation with each other. This conversation can be seen as dialogic.

There has been much investigation of the dialogic approach to forms as Grant Kester observes in *Conversation Pieces - Community and Communication in Modern Art*, in the chapter entitled 'Dialogical Aesthetics' (Kester, 2004). Kester observes discourse on the work of a seminal figure in the study of dialogics, Mikhail Bakhtin, when he states, "In his book *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy* (1999), Ken Hrischkop argues for the ongoing relevance of Bakhtin's work for contemporary politics, focusing on his concept of a "redemptive intersubjectivity" (Kester, 2004). It is 'redemptive intersubjectivity' that speaks to the tone and capabilities of the dialogic approach. The 'redemptive intersubjectivity' is the type of conversation that allows for broad

implications in the dialogic approach in terms of both the social spheres as well as the artistic. It is redemptive intersubjectivity that places emphasis on a dialogue which harbors a more complete understanding of the subject matter that each person or form is attempting to express. Additionally, redemptive intersubjectivity allows for an approach to the expression of subject matter which is a more complete communication and a more autonomous communication that does not assume one person or form (of discourse) will be pulled toward, dominated by, or assimilated into the other.

The application of this dialogic approach is brought forward through acts of rendering art and is constantly finding new form. Such forms are increasingly varied and in dialogue with the other forms. The discourse of these forms and the dialogic approach among them bleeds into the very forms that are emerging. According to Cole Swenson in *American Hybrid - A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, the anthology's collection of new forms is one which "springs from the conviction that the model of binary opposition is no longer the most accurate one and that, while extremes remain, and everywhere we find complex aesthetic and ideological differences, the contemporary moment is dominated by rich writings that cannot be categorized and that hybridize core attributes of pervious "camps" in diverse and unprecedented ways" (Swenson, 2009).

Although at the moment of this collecting of works, there may not have been a congealed a discourse, or it may have been the intention to keep definition at bay, still Swenson states that these forms have attributes that can be conceived of as "both a model of the poem as a vehicle for conveying thoughts, images, and ideas initiated elsewhere - a model that recognized language as an accurate roadmap or system of referring to situations and things in the real world - and a model of the poem as an event on the page,

in which language, in its own right, and poetry is recognized as uniquely capable of displaying that" (Swenson, 2009). As contemporary landscapes changes, so do the ideas that come out of them as well as the forms that convey them.

Robert Creeley, a Beat poet, asserts in his famous statement, 'form is never more than an extension of content' (Swenson, 2009). In the contemporary landscape, contents' forms are becoming increasingly varied, then, as new ideas burgeon and make texture in dialogue. It is the case in the world's social and artistic landscapes, and, specifically, according to Swenson, in American poetry, that the state of form and content "finds itself at a moment when idiosyncrasy rules to such a degree and differences are so numerous that distinct factions are hard, even impossible to pin down" (Swenson, 2009). The tendency in response to this dendritic spreading of veins of form and content is that "Instead, we find a thriving center of alterity, of writing and writers that have inherited and adapted traits developed by everyone from the Romantics through the Modernists to the various avant-gardes, the Confessionalists, Allen's margins, and finally to Language poetry and the New Formalists. The product of contradictory traditions, today's writers often take aspects from two or more to create poetry that is truly post-modern in that it's an unpredictable and unprecedented mix" (Swenson, 2009). The tendency is to gravitate toward hybrid forms of expression. Vanessa Place, our recent interview, gave a further definition of the hybrid form in terms of the spectrum of conceptual writing when she stated, "the hybrid is necessarily a compound monster, whereas the baroque and pure appropriation are at further ends of the spectrum. Now I'm not sure if there is a spectrum, or just a field."

Within the framework of the field of the poetic play are the contributing forms of this hybrid, deconstructed and transformed into a dialogue with itself. This dialogue addresses concepts of representation and realization, a translation between language and performativity. In order to produce the most innovative hybrid, the dialogic approach must be prioritized for the purpose of preserving the autonomy of the forms it encapsulates. In this way, the production of an entirely new form can be generated out of the autonomous and meaningful combination of the included forms. There are other designations for text-based art that are related to the poetic play, which have been widespread and influential, although which are generally not as specific as the poetic play. These designations include 'cross-genre', which is dialectic and appropriative in that there is an argument being made for one form to encapsulate the characteristics of another, as well as 'performative texts', which is a broader term for texts involving performance in some capacity and often denotes texts that imply a physicality generally. These designations have been loosely encapsulating and have encouraged exploration of intertextuality and performativity of text, but do not assist in a more specific discourse of form.

Performative text is a broad term within the arenas of poetry and performance for a text written with the aspect of its performativity included. It is a text that implies physicality. In order to begin to discuss in general what these art works can do, Caroline Bergvall noted in 1995, that earlier in her work she had eschewed the “troubled relation between text and performance which has pervaded the twentieth century” (Cheek, 2010). She wrote texts “as if they were never to leave the page” (Cheek, 2010). Chris Cheek, a British practitioner of performative texts, goes on to state of Bergvall, "Ideas as to how

such texts might be performed, by which she meant at that point live, public, predominantly sonically-projected presentation, were to be faced later. In the same short article she begins to wonder what it would be, for her, to approach performance, not necessarily live in public but rather through textual performativity “within the textual material itself”: to assemble “a text which very materially provides and actualises the notion of its own performance” (Cheek, 2010). Cheek goes on to discuss the reading or voicing of a text in a broad sense by stating that “Those evident skills by which readers exercise their everyday negotiations with their worlds through consensual semiotics of everyday signage add to her sense of what her writing on the page has the potential to perform” (Cheek, 2010). Bergvall inquires, “does the performic increase the performability of a performance text, decrease it, do neither” (Cheek, 2010)? Cheek observes that she “is then concerned with notations, with the complexities of reading practice and with both herself and her reader as that which I call temporary operators of a text in the role of performers” (Cheek, 2010).

Just as reading brings us into the space, so does writing practice. As Peggy Phelan puts it, “Performative writing is *evocative*. It operates metaphorically to render absence present - to bring the reader into contact with “other-worlds,” to those aspects and dimensions of our world that are to her to the text as such by re-marking them. Performative writing evokes worlds that are other-wise intangible, unlocatable: worlds of memory, pleasure, sensation, imagination, affect, and in-sight” (Phelan, 1998). To further her argument that there are capabilities to performative writing that go beyond a mimetic, utilitarian use of language, Phelan states, a performative perspective tends to favor the generative and lucid capacities of language and language encounters - the interplay of

reader and writer in the joint production of meaning. It does not describe, in a narrowly reportorial sense, an objectively verifiable event of process but uses language like paint to create what is self-evidently a *version* of what was, what is, and/or what might be" (Phelan, 1998). Performative writing is a distinction for writing with an implication of creativity within the text and for the potential to express that text in a performance.

Performative writing is the bridge of conversation between what have been long established forms of creative and academic writing. It is a broad category, but a solid field from which to continue the investigation of new forms. Phelan further describes this field of performative writing when she states that in this bridging capability, it suggests "an in-between, 'liminoid' field of possibility, a field of hybrid, mixed forms that exceed categorical distinctions in their effort to *make possible*, to make absence present and yet to recover presence for structural, realist mimesis for poesis" (Phelan, 1998).

Performative writing opens up space for exploration of text and performance. It lays out a broad framework that can encapsulate many more specific forms, such as Poets Theater and the poetic play.

The poetic play is a subset of Poets Theater. The distinction between the poetic play and Poets Theater is that the poetic play is highly conceptual. As opposed to the poetic play, Poets Theater places less of an emphasis on the conceptual form & more an emphasis on theatrical exploration by poets. In my recent interview with Kevin Killian, he asserts of the distinction between the forms, that "a poetic play is one that is a hybrid, part play, and part poem, like the old masques..., a work of Poets Theater is a play written by a poet." Additionally, in my interview with Anselm Berrigan, when discussing forms, specifically poets theater, Berrigan states that poets theater, "is a term more specific to

plays written, produced, directed, and even performed by poets in an organized fashion, as a way to spread out and take on performance and theater through a poetry or poetics-driven manner of dramatic writing."

These forms are very open at the moment to experience and realization. In order to understand this state of poetics affairs more clearly, we now look at one umbrella platform that encapsulates much experimentation in the emerging forms, including hybrid forms of poetry. This platform is Poets Theater. *The Kenning Anthology of Poets Theater 1945-1985*, edited by Kevin Killian and David Brazil, is the seminal collection of Poets Theater (2010). While Poets Theater is a showcase of what Killian refers to as plays written by poets, in *The Kenning Anthology of Poets Theater 1945-1985* the main points addressed are the social, cultural, political, and arts landscapes and how these landscapes lead to the forms of art that take shape within the landscape frameworks.

The Kenning anthology begins with the assertion that Poets Theater is first and foremost about the scene of its production" (Killian, 2010). This scene is a situation that is not static or narrow, but is constantly evolving and exists on many levels. Poets Theater is not only a social scene, but also, crucially a geographical scene, and the two are completely interwoven" (Killian, 2010). This sense of the geographical expands the platform of the social scene of Poets Theater by indicating that "the locales of poets theater are vortices...self-interfering energy patterns like lightening rods, established to receive the influxes of new energy from whatever direction" and brings poets theater into the cultural scene as well in that, "major efflorescences happen in both a place and a time; the cultural production of poets theater manifests itself in periodic form, usually a brief number of years" (Killian, 2010). The locating of Poets Theater within a cultural leads it

into the political as well as into the arts scene. In many ways the politics of the art could be taken as the politics of the scenes of production and documentation of the art works. Addressing current relevant social themes and holding space for the work in either private or public spaces brings the work into an active politics.

In terms of documentation of Poets Theater, much can be revealed in the task of anthologizing Poets Theater, of which it is stated that, "several possibilities emerged during the months of compilation. First and foremost, the material is widely scattered" (Killian, 2010). The means for collection becomes, again, social and cultural, which are very interwoven with the political and artistic. In order to anthologize Poets Theater, "You really need an extraordinary range of collaborators if you want to do the job properly, for no one person knows all about poets theater, and many of the texts bring new meaning to the word "fugitive" (Killian, 2010). Often it comes down to knowing a practitioner personally in order to know a work or the witnessing of a work, and this knowing has been done within an underground community of artists. Of the endeavor of documentation of Poets Theater, it is stated that, 'in every quarter of the nation (America), individual artists did what they could to make the dream come true, but sometimes we don't have the documents to do them justice" (Killian, 2010).

While the endeavor of documenting Poets Theater solicits its social, cultural and political scenes as means for collection, these scenes also create a difficulty, which becomes apparent in the retrieval of works. Of what has been considered Poets Theater, and subsequently in the background of its social, cultural and political scenes, there is a notion that "in practice many writers with a serious investment in poetry exhibit an ambivalence toward drama, and it seems to stand in uneasy relationship to their real

work, a little apart from it (Killian, 2010). This pervading attitude directly influenced the production of work in Poets Theater, and therefore, for the purposes of documentation, "little of it is in print, even the plays of the greatest practitioners of Poets Theater" (Killian, 2010). The pervasiveness of the attitude of uneasiness in the production of Poets Theater meant that "for some, poets theater was a sort of failed experiment, or perhaps in rosier terms a summer romance that fades when the real thing comes along. For some poets, their work in the theater occupied them for a brief season, no more" (Killian, 2010). Since the production and the documentation of Poets Theater are interwoven, and due to the pervading perception of Poets Theater, "many a manuscript was not deemed important enough to save – seen as disposable" (Killian, 2010).

Despite the difficulty of retrieval, and even though texts went missing and manuscripts had to be rescued from wastepaper baskets, many works of Poets Theater were produced and have survived in all their varied scenes and forms. Poets Theater navigated through such trials as "in the judgment of theater history, Poets Theater has become a subdivision of "textuality", bourgeois textuality, and therefore opposed to the avant-garde, director-and-performance-dominated theater of the 60's – words on a page, opposed to the wordless energy of the essentialist theatrical moment" (Killian, 2010).

While the anthology brings in various forms that exist upon the stage or platform of Poets Theater, the emphasis is very much on the text, with the performative capabilities left vastly unexplored in contrast to the potential of performativity in the texts of Poets Theater. My interest lies in all of the forms these texts for performance take, as well as the terms by which they are identified. Among these terms are, 'poets plays', 'poem plays', 'scenarios', 'scripts to perform', 'theater experiments', 'poets drama', 'poetic

texts', 'performative texts', 'happenings', 'scores', 'instructions', and 'poetic plays'. Some of these terms denote particular forms, while others allude to a style. It is not an endpoint to distinguish one term as form and another as style, as it is for the practitioner to decide where the work will go. With the practitioner at the helm, the ship navigates by the pivotal 'difficulty', as Stein refers to it, the 'idea' according to Hegel in his "Lectures on Aesthetics", or what I'm calling more generally the theme being addressed in the work.

For the purposes of this project, the focus will be specifically on the hybrid form of the poetic play with an emphasis on the performative capabilities or the realization of the form as a response to the difficulty of a consistent apparent lack of emphasis on the performativity in the form by its creators. This is the approach that will be taken in my practice-based research in order to expand the form toward its potential in all of its hybrid capabilities and explore the research question of, and methodology in addressing: How can a dialogic practice-based investigation of the hybrid form of the poetic play through the five individual sense modalities assist in the aesthetic situating of, and subsequently the fully realized definition of, the poetic play?

In differentiating the form of the poetic play, the term 'cross-genre' comes into the conversation. Cross-genre refers to a mixing of genres or forms. As stated on the poetics website, 'Prezi.com', in reference to the work of Anne Waldman as cross-genre, her work "included different elements from other genres: music, journaling, chanting, and visual art" (Haggerty, 2012). Cross-genre is a broad designation for work that blends elements, but does not consciously take a form. It is a designation that is explorative and innovative, but remains a dialectic in that it tends to argue for pulling elements of other genres in to itself while remaining the original genre. Cross-genre refers generally to any

discourse or crossover between disciplines spanning from psychology to biology to literature to dance. The outcome or platform of this crossover is not specified and can range from the discussion sphere in a seminar to the plan for a scientific inquiry.

Cross-genre is concerned with audience and is often used in association with marketing. Generally cross-genre describes the borrowing by one genre from elements of another, but still owning itself as the original genre. Cross-genre work borrows more from others, claiming and integrating elements of others, and becomes an interesting variation on its original self. However, the result is not as clefted and transformed as the true hybrid form.

Generally cross-genre forms use a more dialectic, or argumentative approach to discourse. The result is a pulling or cancelling out of one stance into or by another. 'Argumentation' is defined by Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst in *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation - the Pragma-dialectical Approach* as "a verbal, social, and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint...The speaker or writer defends this standpoint, by means of the argumentation, to a listener or reader who doubts its acceptability or has a different standpoint. The argumentation is aimed at *convincing the listener or reader of the acceptability of the standpoint*" (Eemeren, 2004). While valuable in investigation, this approach does not describe the poetic play form. A dialectic approach would deem it closer to cross-genre work in that the dialectic argumentation pulls one aspect into or convinces the other to exist on the former aspect's terms within its parameters. The poetic play is more influenced by a dialogic approach in its true hybridity. The dissolving of the

designations of its contributing forms and the reconstruction of an entirely new third thing is a creative process done best with the autonomy of the contributing forms in mind. The true lifting out of them and into a hybrid is possible by consciously choosing what to draw from each contributing form to the field of the drafting table in the dialogic generation of the new form, identified as a hybrid.

According to Lisa Jarnot, from a lecture she gave at Naropa University entitled, "Robert Duncan and Field Theory" on the concepts of 'Field Theory', 'Open Field', and 'Free Range', July 3, 2001, "A field is a bounded area, a framed area" (Jarnot, 2001). Jarnot goes further to state of 'field' that "You could think of it as a frame of film. Up the hill there at University of Colorado we have Stan Brakhage, who is a 'field poetics' filmmaker. So in that case you have a field that is a frame of film. You have, you could say, a film in its totality is a field. You could say that Stan's films as a whole are a field and that his life or anyone's life is a field. Simply put, it's a bounded area. It's an area with boundaries" (Jarnot, 2001).

The field can be applied to laws of nature as well as art. This gives the concept some agency. Jarnot explains that "Technically, scientifically, field theory comes to us from a guy named Michael Faraday and he was born in 1791...this is his definition: "A field is a condition in space which has the potential to produce a force." So you could think of a magnetic field. You could think of electrical conduction. You could think of a field as a place with boundaries, with objects, and with potential forces between objects" (Jarnot, 2001). This dynamic, active sphere of creative generation is a useful way of conceiving of the workshop of the poetic play. It enables the hybrid to create meaning and to both cause influence and be influenced by the forms in its landscape. Jarnot refers

to Robert Duncan in this realm of possibility. She states, "Duncan's great word is 'potential'. He loved the word 'potential'. He gets that also from Alfred Lord Whitehead, the philosopher, who has a book called *Process and Reality*, 1929. Whitehead takes the idea of field and what happens in the field and he turns it into a kind of metaphysical, neoplatonic thing" (Jarnot, 2001). She goes on to illuminate Duncan's theory in terms of his notion of 'actual entities' and how they function in a dynamic field, some of them becoming 'eternal objects' by the infusement of some force.

Having a field to work within gives us some kind of framework. Jarnot outlines the definition of a field as, "a place with boundaries, with objects, with potential forces between objects, but you don't see the forces, or you don't see the potential forces between objects, but they're there...Field is non-hierarchical. There's a process, but not necessarily a progress. We don't have a traditional focal point" (Jarnot, 2001).

In the case of the 'poetic play field', the 'objects in the field' that are being focused on are the forms of: the poem, the play, and the elements that comprise the two forms. The 'forces between them' in the case of the poetic play are a dialogue and a making of a new, third, hybrid thing speaking to a theme.

In order for the poetic play to make meaning around a theme, the elements that comprise the forms may be played with until they all speak to that focal point or theme. The poetic play has an inherently conceptual framework as a form in that the forms that constitute the hybrid lend to one another in self-referential dialogue. The text indicates it's own performance, the anti-mimetic poetic language plays with representation and realization between the signifier and the signified. Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman deduce in their collaborative work, *Notes on Conceptualisms* that the hybrid form of

writing is a conceptual form of writing. This deduction begins with the statement that, "All conceptual writing is allegorical writing" (Place, 2009). From that point, they continued to explore the narrative of allegorical writing when they stated, "Note that pre-textual associations assume post-textual understandings. Note that narrative may mean a story told by the allegorical writing itself, or a story told pre- or post-textually, about the writing itself or writing itself" (Place, 2009).

From the notion that conceptual writing is allegorical writing, Place and Fitterman move into the idea of allegorical writing consisting of a pre-text and post-textual, which is further affirmed in their citation of a paper by Wynstan Curnow presented at the Conceptual Writing Conference held in 2008 at the University of Arizona Poetry Center. In it Curnow posited that, "while not identifying conceptual writing as conceptual allegorical as such, suggests that conceptual writing could be classified as pre- or post-textual (or a hybrid). Pre-textual writing assumes a "pre-text," an extant idea - the constraint/procedure, the "strategic generality" of the technique, such as appropriation or documentation" (Place, 2009). To continue in the discussion of the methodology of conceptual writing and how it relates to the poetic play, Place and Fitterman highlight the performative aspect by stating that "Curnow notes that conceptual writing invites its own performativity, a performativity that often crosses genres and media, and is an attempt to disembed the meaning "in the contingent and the contextual" (Place, 2009). They also state that the hybrid form is conceptual and lies on the spectrum of conceptual writing between 'Pure Appropriation' and the 'Baroque' in that "the baroque is one end of the conceptual spectrum, and pure appropriation the other, with the pure or hybrid form in between" (Place, 2009).

Based on this deduction, it is clear that the hybrid form is one that may contain a 'pre-text' as a point of origin in meaning and process. From out of allegory come the iterations, or acts of repeating a process with the aim of approaching a desired result, of the 'pre-text'. In the case of my methodology, the iterations are my performative realizations of the pre-text of my poetic play series entitled *Portraits*. This approach to hybridity is the focus of my methodology and will serve as a means to reaching the definition of the hybrid form of the poetic play through my methodological investigatory process.

My performative realizations are the expression of the 'play' aspect of the hybrid form of the poetic play. Just as John Cage would realize his textual sound scores into expression through sound, my performative realizations are expressions of my poetic play texts as they progress through a process of translations. These translations are iterations and realizations that are the expression of a poetic play pre-text. Each realization is informed by realizations and iterations that came before and that will follow. The realizations hold the place of what might be called the performance of the script in theater, but in the case of the investigation of the poetic play, are being called realizations because the expressions of the poetic play text are being created through various medias. This expanding of expressive platforms calls for the broader term, 'realization', which is used in many art forms for the expression of an idea through a form. The realizations used in this methodology are each created through the five senses respectively in order to establish aesthetic orientation for and ultimately to move toward a definition of the fully realized form of the poetic play.

My five creative pieces work toward a definition of the poetic play in that they demonstrate a dialogic methodology that alternates between text and realization (or performance) of text, five times through each of the five senses in order to establish and expand the aesthetics and therefore the definition of the poetic play. As a method of exploring a hybrid form, I am alternating back and forth between two of the forms that comprise the poetic play. These forms are, respectively, 1) the text, which is the most recognizable part of the poem and 2) the most recognizable part of the play, the performance. This alternating, back and forth process of exploring the hybrid form of the poetic play is a progressive investigation of the form through its textual iterations and performances or realizations one after another, each informed by the piece that came before.

Chapter 2 - Literary Analysis of the Poetic Play

In chapter one, the basic concept of the poetic play was defined. This chapter goes more deeply into the poetic play with an analysis of five examples of the form.

An article was written by John Beer published in 2009 entitled, "The Text in and of Performance" in the St. Marks Church Poetry Project newsletter, which has been a sounding board for the community of Beat lineage poetic practice. In it, Beer writes on the topic of poetry and theater. He asserts that, "Theater belongs to the poets," and that "the fortunes of a poet's theater, the scrappy, hybrid form that could trace a lineage to Artaud and Stein (with, maybe the Irish Abbey Theatre as a benevolent great-aunt), though through fugitive mid-century institutions in Cambridge and the Bay Area, seems to be enjoying a moment of relative prosperity" (Beer, 2009). He goes on to refer to a number of examples of this presence of poets theater in the current literary landscape, including reference to, "Small Press Traffic's annual festivities [having been] joined by events in Alexandria, VA and (ahem) Chicago, while the crisp cornucopia of Rodrigo *Toscano's Collapsible Poetics Theater* (Fence Books) will soon be joined by a much-awaited anthology from Kenning Editions" (Beer, 2009). The editor of Kenning Editions, Kevin Killian, a poet and play-write currently practicing Poets Theater in the Bay Area, stated in my interview with him on poets theater, that it is a community of poets experimenting with theater.

According to Beers, Poets Theater entails "an ethos as much as it does a mode of aesthetic production - emphasizing the small-scale, the communal, the evanescent" (Beer 2009). From this distinct platform of poets theater there is a further distinction made for

another form that has been called a poetic theater. Of poetic theater, Beer cites Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre as an example that has been running the past five decades. His description of poetic theater is that "in some instances [it] is emblemized by its attention to the formal and performative possibilities of language, as in this spring's *Telephone*, by the poet Ariana Reines" (Beer). He goes further to assert that, for him, "the category need not be limited to language-centered works, though, but applies as well to those pieces which eschew the traditional theater's focus on character and conflict in favor of association, image, and caesura" (Beer 2009). Coming out of Naropa University, there was a term used for a form along the lines of this 'poetic theater', and that is the 'poetic play'. The terminology used to refer to the recent innovation of poetry and performance is at times very specific and at times a place holder with relatively undefined meaning.

It is worth noting that these terms come out of communities of artists performing and become solidified to varying degrees within the time that lapses. An important distinction to make in the terminology in as far as the intent of the artists and the capabilities of the forms carrying these names, is the difference between theater and drama. Mark Fortier discusses recent theory of theater by asserting that, "performance is a term with a number of meanings" (Fortier, 2002). He goes on to state that performance "can mean performance art, a certain kind of paratheatrical activity we see in the work of such artists as Carolee Schneeman and Coco Fusco; it can mean that aspect of theatre involved in actually putting on a show; it can mean the entire theatrical experience; it can expand to include other theatre-like activities such as sporting events and religious rituals; it can mean just about any activity, including private acts such as getting dressed

and or walking down the street" (Fortier, 2002). This opens up the concept of what performance can be and creates an interchange between the terms, 'theater' and 'performance'. This does not necessarily cover 'drama', however, which is "The literary, textual aspect of theatre, for example, the drama texts of Shakespeare" (Fortier, 2002). Once there is a text, then there are "In theatre two sets of readers - the theatre artists who traditionally "read", interpret, the written text, and the audience who read the new theatrical text created by the mediated reading" (Rabkin, 1983). By beginning with the innovation of the text on the page, as in the case in what I was introduced to as the poetic play, there is more room conceptually for innovation of performativity, which I haven't seen demonstrated as a rigorous aspect of the hybrid. I endeavor to do this in my creative work in the form in order to expand its capabilities. This work aims to establish a larger sphere of aesthetics and history of the performativity of the form, and, therefore, to be able to discuss the form in a more realized sense of itself within an expanded framework.

What does the genre of the poetic play make possible? Its aim is to bring the page to life and to vitalize language. Language as poetry may be brought into the world and made subject to its laws of time, space, and tangibility. One way it can be brought into the world is on the wings of the play.

Defining the poetic play involves identify a number of essential elements whose presence determines to what extent each play is a poetic play and why or how it is so by the standards established in their relationships. In other words, by identifying these essential elements, it is possible to identify what kind of poetic play each work is and how the body of all these works create a contextual or relative definition of the genre.

In the following discussion I posit five essential elements of the poetic play

constituting a model of analysis that highlights the various aspects of the poetic play, in order to arrive at a set of criteria which might identify the relatively undefined genre of the poetic play. I will then go on to apply the model to five creative pieces by five artists to determine how and to what degree they might be poetic plays. The five elements through which I define the poetic play for the purpose of analysis are listed as follows: 1) form; 2) language / referentiality; 3) tangibility, or the translation from the page to the tangible in terms of the temporal, spatial, and material, 4) character / voice, and 5) theme / the difficulty / or self-fulfilling apex. A brief explanation of what each element entails follows.

The first essential element is that of the form of the piece. This can be seen as how historically the text has appeared on the page in terms of how it adheres to or departs from the traditional nature of its form. The artist meets or breaks formal expectations in order to make meaning. In the case of the poetic play, because it is a hybrid, or combination of two forms, the history of the form involves both parts of its hybridity, namely the dramatic form and any recognized poetic form. Here, we employ the notion that “Form is often used merely to designate a genre or literary type...it is also, however – the term for a central critical concept. In this application, the form of a work is the principle that determines how a work is ordered and organized” (Abrams 1999). The form in the case of a poetic play is its own interpretation of the melding of two forms, the poem and the play, into one hybrid and is constituted by the various parts of language characteristic of the form. The hybrid is a form in a dialogue with itself between its own two or more parts. It is dependent upon the individual author to what degree this melding is present in a poetic play.

The second essential element involves language and referentiality. It is concerned with how the rules and parts of language may be used in order to emphasize, express, and further the meaning of the piece. There may be some overlap or sharing of these two aspects in that the language may at times become not only referential but also self-referential on various levels. The language used can refer to objects outside itself, points to itself, or contextualizes itself within the play. So, as we begin to explore the palate or medium of language in this form of the poetic play, we start with the notion that one function of language is regarding “Reference [which] concerns the ability of language to describe, capture, express, or convey...the external world in symbols which the mind can manipulate” (Brogan 1976). Another way to state this property is in terms of mimetic and non-mimetic language, which are contingent on the preceding set of terms referential and self-referential. It is true that “in general, language has two modes for representation (or reference), one non-mimetic (non-referential, nonrealistic), the other mimetic” (Brogan 1976). For the purposes of this analysis, it may be safe to say that mimetic is equivalent to referential language and non-mimetic is analogous to self-referential language on various levels. It is helpful to have a lens through which to view how language may be used poetically, representationally, and dramatically as we approach specific works.

The third essential element is that of the tangible or the translation from the page to the tangible in terms of the temporal, spatial, and material. This translation is an exploration of the realization of language and the performative potential of the poetic play. Time is a measure of matter through space. The accounting for, or allowance of time within the context of the poetic play is equated to the acknowledgement of the art

being subject to the tangible or real. It is art in the context of the real or art enacted upon by the real. Regarding the aspect of the poetic play that is performative, "The stage is a crucible in which the human perception of time, of present, is melted down and transmuted....Illusions of duration, character, event, exist in constant tension with the immediacy of live performance....It is a continual reference to the fact that the performance is, after all, a performance and not a re-enactment, taking place in the present as well as in theatrical, imagined time (Savage 1981). The occupation of space can be represented through, for example, a set or landscape or by the enactment of characters upon objects within such a set or landscape (although it is not limited to this). In any case there tend to be parameters of space and time established within which there may be action taking place.

The fourth essential element is character or voice. This aspect is present on the page and in the translation to real substance and sound in space. Conventional theater frequently attaches considerable importance to the idea of the 'realistic' character; as Savage notes, "The contemporary well-crafted 'naturalistic' play insists that everything about the characters seem 'real'. Good dialogue is transparent – it sounds like people talking" (Savage 1981). This presumption is challenged in the poetic play form on a number of levels which we'll see as we explore the specific works. The poetic play exists in a state of flux, challenging, or utilizing for new purposes, one construct after another in its quest to be what it is, an experimental genre with a tendency toward self-fulfillment.

One aspect of character and voice which may be addressed in the poetic play, is the presence or lack of monologic and dialogic language. Considerations of language in terms of the conceptual differentiation between monologic and dialogic language include

terms such as “functional language”, which “pertains to the relationship between the goal of expression and the linguistic means appropriate for the attainment of this goal. In each given case, a speaking individual determines the choice of a certain set of means (“a functional language”) for the actual utterance” (Mukarovsky, 1977). This goal of expression and faculty for doing so can be either adhered to or broken to make meaning. Also, there is a further consideration that, “The choice between monologue and dialogue does not, however, depend only on the speaker’s intention and decision but on the relationship between both the parties participating in the discourse, the speaking and the listening participant, the active and the passive subject” (Mukarovsky, 1977). So, with the poetic play's hybridity comes the capability of existing as partly poem, and partly play. To what degree each particular poetic play has been constructed to include characters who can speak and make enactment possible determines how the fourth element of character or voice is present. This means there can be any degree of poetic language infused with aspects of the play such as the monologue and dialogue.

These properties are certainly subject to disruption and innovation within the poetic play. In fact, a character in a piece may or may not be actually named or may be present as a voice or perspective instead of an actual persona, which brings forth the question of whether the voice or character is meant to actually speak and be heard. Also, the poetic language used may, again, be anti-mimetic, or self-referential and in dialogue with itself. Finally there is one more level that the essence of the dialogic is involved in the poetic play and that is in the inherent formal dialogue between the parts of the hybrid as they cohere and feed into one another. These adaptations tend to serve a purpose that assists the overall affect.

The idea of serving a purpose within the form, introduces the concept behind the fifth essential element, which is one concerning the theme, difficulty, or self-fulfilling apex of the piece. Those artists who write poetic plays, “all have demanded...more from language than is commonly seen or heard in a conventional theatrical context” (Savage, 1981). The genre of the poetic play tends toward creating a contextual world of meaning within its framework becoming its own language or its own reality. The other four essential elements of the piece lend themselves in a converging of meaning in order to deliver a theme, which acts as a sort of orientation or catalyst for the piece, one which the audience or the reader gleans through the experience of having read or witnessed the unfolding of the piece in its entirety and all its various elements. Due to the highly deconstructed nature of the hybrid, this orienting central theme becomes increasingly important for the coherence of the poetic play form.

Now I have outlined a model of five essential criteria. Next, I will apply this model of elements to five of those pieces in order to see how each work could be a poetic play and to what degree. I chose to include the five analyzed here for several reasons. First, they illustrate the length of time the genre spans. Second, they arise from various cultures. Third, they all fit the definition of a poetic play to the degree that they can be discussed as such.

Analysis of Piece 1 - *Counting Her Dresses*, by Gertrude Stein:

The first piece I will apply the essential elements to in order to see how it could be a poetic play is, *Counting Her Dresses*, by Gertrude Stein, published in 1922. Stein, was an innovative American novelist, poet, play-write, and art collector who became an

ex-patriot and lived in Paris for the first half of the 20th Century where she was instrumental in the bohemian art scene acting as matron and participant and creating cutting edge work. She is counted as one of the grandmothers influencing the Beat lineage and many of her methods have been embraced and reflected in the work that has come out of the Beat American avant-garde poetry and art scene. Here, her piece is actually a play in terms of the form, the first of five essential elements of the poetic play, to the extent that on the page is stated beneath the piece's titled, "Counting Her Dresses," the words, "A Play". Also included is the expected distinction of Parts, although in this case there is an excessive number of parts, from I – XLI. There are also varying numbers of acts within each part, which is not abnormal for a play.

However, the form is disrupted and diverges from the normal play form in a number of areas. There is a complete absence of a cast listing and no designated characters or narrator, no stage directions, and no director's notes. Instead, it is a sequence of one-line acts, (and two two-line acts) that continues throughout the piece, which more closely resemble lines of poetry.

The second essential element is in the language and referentiality of the poetic play. In the case of Stein's play, one of the aspects of the language, which designates it as belonging to the poetic play is in the punctuation of the poetic lines. All of the questions posed are made to resemble the tone of stage directions by being punctuated with periods. An example is in the line in Act I of Part VIII posing the question, "Shall I wear my blue" (Stein, 277), which is punctuated with a period instead of a question mark of course. In this manner, questions are given as statements and therefore disrupted to create the effect, or to be reminiscent, of poetic stage directions to some degree.

Language in the piece is made more poetic by the use of repetition as well, which is a technique used frequently in poetry to create an effect of rumination or to emphasize a thought, image, or sensation. There is a strong presence of repetition throughout the piece and certainly in Parts IX through XI during which the line, “Thank you for the cow” (Stein, 277), is repeated exactly twice in sequence and then partially repeated in the following line, “Thank you very much” (277), to be followed shortly by the repetition of the previous word, “Shall” in the line, “Shall you be annoyed” (277). Also, most obviously the repetition is present compoundedly in Part IV, Acts II and III in their lines, “Repeat it” (Stein 276), followed by, “I repeat it” (Stein 276). In this sense the piece takes on the properties of a poem within the play form, creating a lyrical effect showcasing to some degree the cadence of language.

The referential aspect comes into play in the piece as well as part of the second essential element in that the repetition of language present in the piece lends itself to the idea of counting that is central to the piece, and thus self-referential. This counting, cited in relation to the first element as the excessive and rapid sequence of acts numbered throughout the piece, is also referred to in two ways. The first reference to counting is more indirect and takes place in Part II, Act II in the line, “Act quickly” (Stein 275). This reference points to the play’s own use of the rapid change of acts as a perpetuation or momentum, a counting as impetus if you will. The second way in which the piece refers to itself in terms of its inherent or self-perpetuating property of counting is in Part I, Act II in the line, “I count her dresses again” (Stein 275), followed shortly by a line in Part XIX, Act I which states, “I mean one two three” (Stein 279). The reference to rapid sequence, momentum, and counting is present throughout the piece and creates a sort of

self-fulfilling quality for the reader or audience.

The element of the tangible in terms of the temporal, spatial, and material is present in the piece as the third essential element in a number of ways, which are also related to the other essential elements. One way in which time is represented is in the repetition or partial repetition of the lines, which refer to “Counting Her Dresses”. The lines change and refer to the passage of the actual counting of the dresses as though someone, or more than one person, is doing the act of counting throughout the piece. This is evident in Part XXXVII, Act I in the line, “Count her dresses” (Stein 284), which is closely followed by the line in Part XXXVIII, Act II that commands, “Count her dresses again” (Stein 284).

Further evidence of the passage of time is present in the apparent dialogue or exchange of different points of view. There seems to be a direct exchange taking place and going back and forth which denotes a passage of time as this exchange normally takes place within a set time frame and in this case there is no indication otherwise. As this passage of time is present in the dialogue aspect of the play and linked within the hybrid to its poetic language, it lends a temporality to the language of this poetic play. An example of this sequential exchange can be seen in Part XXXI, Acts I – VII in the lines,

Act I

Reflect more.

Act II

I do want a garden

Act III

Do you.

Act IV

And clothes

Act V

I do not mention clothes.

Act VI

No you didn't but I do.

Act VII

Yes I know that (Stein 282).

One further aspect of time is more self-referential in that the actual days of the week are sited in relation to the actual time frame that encapsulates the piece. This reference to the time in which the characters of the play exist is Acts II & III of Part XXIX in the lines,

Act II

Thursday

Act III

We hope for Thursday (Stein 281),

as well as in Part XXXIV, Act I in the line, "Can you expect her today" (Stein 283), followed by the line in Act I of Part XXXV that states, "We can be proud of tomorrow" (Stein 283). Again, this rapid temporal sequence rocking back and forth between a sort of dialogue and indication of act changes becomes a melding of poetic impetus and conventions of the play.

Another part of the third element, the occupation of space is found in this case most apparently in the reference of the voice(s) to the objects with which space is shared in the context of the piece. Reference to the dresses that are being counted is made

throughout such as in Part I, Act II in the line, “I count her dresses again” (Stein 275), as well as in the line in Part XII, Act I that states, “I do not like this table” (Stein 278). In the former example the reference is most direct, the indication of the table being absolutely immediate.

The element of voice or character constitutes the fourth essential element and is throughout “Counting Her Dresses,” a disrupted one. There are no actual characters named, although there seems to be a dialogue being held between two or more characters. The changes of voice are most often indicated by the denotation of a new act instead of by that of a character being named. An example of the sort of dialogue present throughout the play can be found beginning in Part I, Acts II – IV with the lines,

Act II

I count her dresses again.

Act III

Do not mind the tooth.

Act IV

In a minute (Stein 275).

The fact that there are no distinct characters denoted indicates the possibility that the dialogue is taking place within the disparate parts of one perspective. Also the dialogue is not necessarily continuous or sequential. Any one line seems somewhat contingent on, or at least associated with, the following line. This loose or not necessarily coherent dialogue seems to be often characteristic of the dialogue present in poetic plays.

Finally, the fifth essential element of the poetic play is where the thematic purpose comes through the other elements. Here the conglomerate meaning or self-

fulfilling apex of the play may be summated in a statement of theme (which can be a difficulty that is being addressed) that is realized by the various aspects and uses of language. The previous four elements serve the fifth which is an allowance to state the theme which may be posed in this case as “a frivolous outfitting,” or “a flighty dressing,” perhaps “flighty” in the sense of the quick flittering of wings and “dressing” as just that putting on of a change of position, disposition, and image again and again.

Analysis of Piece 2 - *Words and Music – A Radio Play*, by Samuel

Beckett:

The second piece to apply the model to is, *Words and Music – A Radio Play*, text written in 1962 by Samuel Beckett with music by John Beckett. Again, chosen as an innovator of form, Beckett has been credited in his work for being instrumental in the Theatre of the Absurd as well as becoming increasingly minimalist in his works. *Words and Music - A Radio Play* is a piece in which the five essential elements of the poetic play may be found most prevalently of his body of performance works. Although, he did not participate in the circles of artists who I am positing have created the majority of this genre of works, he has been counted as an influence in the lineage of the Beats due to the radically experimental nature of his work. The first of the elements found in this work, form, is made unique in this piece and distinguishable as a poetic play by the disrupting of the traditional form of the play in a number of ways and the reconfiguring the form using both the possibilities of the play and of poetry in terms of the element of form. Here is created an alchemical interaction of the two to make meaning in a form that is neither

one nor the other, but a new hybrid form.

One way Beckett disrupts form in his piece is the use and misuse or changed use of the director's notes and the stage directions. Beginning on the first page of the piece and continuing throughout, an association or parallel is established between two modes of language normally employed by the traditional play form. This parallel is the use of the same word, "humble" (Beckett 23), denoted in the same italicized font. One use of the word, 'humble' is as the director's notes, indicated by being enclosed in parenthesis. The other use of the word, "humble" (Beckett 23) is closer to a stage direction than dialogue, even though it is placed at the beginning of a phrase not enclosed in parenthesis and, follows the name of a character with a colon. There is further disruption of form in the transition from a dialogue form to that of a more lyric arrangement of words beginning with when the lines following the indication of the character called "Words" change from a form indicative of dialogue to one that is more lyric such as is illustrated in the lines,

Age is when to a man
Huddled o'er the ingle
Shivering for the hag
To put the pan in the bed
And bring the toddy
She comes in the ashes
Who loved could not be won
Or won not loved
Or some other trouble
Comes in the ashes

Like in that old light
The face in the ashes
That old starlight
On the earth again (Beckett 28).

This change in the form of the words following the character called "Words" continues from this point through to the end, although not consistently.

In "Words and Music," the element of language and referentiality carries many of the significances of the previous element of form as the piece oscillates between carrying more heavily the attributes of a play and then a poem, turning it's constraints in upon itself in the various aspects of form as expressed through language. Although here it is possible to highlight the significance of the lyric language used as well as of the use of the referential significance of the words chosen to name the characters.

The character named (or the word holding the place of a character name) "Words" tends throughout to use actual words and speech. Another character, "Music" tends to relay music as dialogic involvement, whereas, "Croak" most often delivers short croak-like statements such as, "The face. (Pause.) The face. (Pause.) The face. (Pause.) The face" (Beckett 28). In this way the characters fulfill their self-referential roles of communication. In some cases the characters also refer to one another in a referential manner such as when the character, "Words" delivers a musical rendition.

Throughout the piece there is also a use of simultaneously lyrical and self-referential language in the dialogue, which can be seen in the piece when the character named "Words" refers to itself by questioning the meaning or referential nature of the words (which are what we assume the character is) "love" and "soul" in the lines, "Is

love the word?...Is soul the word?...Do we mean love, when we say love?...Soul, when we say soul” (Beckett 25). The piece again refers to itself as having poetic tendencies when it is stated in stage directions, “(...Change to a poetic tone...)” (Beckett 31).

There are also lyrical properties of language represented in the use of repetition, as when the character named “Words” changes its speech again to a lyric form and stating,

Then down a little way
Through the trash
To where...towards where...
...
Then down a little way
Through the trash
Towards where... (Beckett 31).

There is also the use of parts of language such as the continual use of the leading quality of the ellipsis, which creates the sense of putting off or vagueness that furthers a tone of ambiguity of definition or circumstance. This sense is present, for instance, in the inability of the character named “Music” to answer the character named “Croak”, which causes miscommunication and self-referential inconclusiveness in the dialogue. This ambiguity is also present in the illogical nature of the actual words used in the dialogue. Phrases used such as the one by the character named “Croak”, “My comforts! Be friends” (Beckett 23), creates further ambiguity.

The aspect of time and space within the piece is the third element to consider. Indications of time and space are the properties of the play and so reinforce that aspect of

the hybrid. This element is present in the dialogue throughout the piece. Where the content of the dialogue can be seen as one character's statement referring to the previous character's statement, it is a denotation of a passage of time in terms of a conversation that is happening in sequence or 'real time'. An example of this sort of dialogue present throughout the piece can be seen in the exchange between the characters named "Croak" and "Words" as they address love,

Croak: Forgive. (Pause). In the tower. (Pause). The face.

(Long pause). Theme tonight... (Pause). Theme

tonight...love. (Pause). My club. (Pause). Joe.

Words (as before): My Lord.

Croak: Love. (Pause. Thump of club on ground.) Love!

Words (orotund): Love is of all the passions the most

powerful passion and indeed no passion is more powerful

than the passion of love. (Clears throat.) This is the mode in

which the mind is most strongly affected and indeed in no

mode is the mind more strongly affected than in this (Beckett 24).

In addition to the very exchange of words between characters denoting the passage of time, words are used which actually refer to the passage of time within the piece. One example of this direct reference to the passage of time is on the first page when the character, "Words" proclaims after an extensive monologue about passion and the soul, "At last" (Beckett 23), at the arrival or entrance of "Croak" whom he'd apparently been awaiting as he spoke. A further example of direct reference to time within the piece would be in the continual presence at the beginning of the piece of the

stage direction, “(as before)” (Beckett 23), indicating that the same occurrence is happening repeatedly in the characters and their tendencies. Another instance of a statement of time is in the stage directions for the character “Music”, “Rap of baton and warmly sentimental, about one minute” (Beckett 25). There is also the passage of time shown within the span of one statement by an individual character as in the case of the character, “Words” when it is stated, “Again. (Pause. Imploring.) Again” (Beckett 32)!

The aspect of space is also included in the third element and can be credited equally with delivering the translation from the page to the tangible or real-actual, which is one crucial effect of the conglomerate parts of the poetic play. Within the context of the piece, the occupation of space is established by asserting the presence of physical objects and bodies and depicting the interaction amongst them. This establishment of physicality happens immediately in the first line of the piece with “Music’s” stage directions, or supposed voice, stating that there is a “Small orchestra softly tuning up” (Beckett 23). This determination of physical space continues with the perceived approach of the character “Croak” entering the context of the piece. “Croak’s” approach is perceived as the “Distant sound of rapidly shuffling carpet slippers” (Beckett 23), the statement of which is written as stage directions. The stage continues to be set by the sounds created by objects within the space enacting upon other tangible surfaces. Such interactions include “Croak’s” “Thump of club on ground” (Beckett 24), and “Music’s” “Rap of baton on stand” (Beckett 25), both of which are indicated as stage directions.

The fourth element involved in *Words and Music*, is character and voice. The

characters present in the piece express themselves in terms of their names, “Words,” “Music,” and “Croak”. “Words” most often expresses itself by using words in speech. Its speech is the most involved and varied of the three characters and is mainly narrative in the beginning of the piece. This narrativity is exemplified in “Word’s” monologue on the first page addressing passions of the mind and soul. In this monologue, “Words” speaks in a narrative voice, stating, for instance, an assertion that is continually contradicted and adapted by itself and in response to the others, “this is the mode in which the mind is most affected and indeed – (Burst of tuning. Loud, imploring.) Please! (Tuning dies away. As before.) The mode in which the mind is most affected and indeed in no mode is the mind more affected than in this, by passion we are to understand a movement of the soul...” (Beckett 23).

After awhile we begin to see that character and voice is also self-referential in that “Words” begins to ponder its own words and gradually concedes to “Music” by eventually, “(Trying to sing)” (Beckett 26), its words. “Music” consistently represents musical expression. The precise nature of this musical expression is unclear. However, it is clear that there is a musical communication taking place by the statements which seem to serve a purpose much like stage directions such as, “Plays air through alone, then invites WORDS with opening, pause, invites again and finally accompanies very softly” (Beckett 28). “Croak”, as was stated previously, tends to communicate in short fragmented expressions whether in sounds such as “Groans” (Beckett 25), or in language such as, “Love. (Pause. Thump of club on ground.) Love” (Beckett 24)! “Croak” seems to be a reactionary character, one not necessarily directly related to the situation at hand judging by its tendency to call the other characters by names that differ

from the names by which they are given in the cast listing. This tendency for illogical or incoherent communication is present in forms other than in the Voice of “Croak” throughout the piece as well. The dialogue, while at times narrative, is also at times incongruous between the other two Characters, “Words” and “Music”.

This takes us to the fifth element, the main theme of the work around which the elements of the piece oscillates. In the case of this piece, the theme is introduced in part when the character “Croak” speaks of the “Theme tonight...(Pause.) Theme tonight...love. (Pause.) Love” (Beckett 24). The second part of the overriding theme goes beyond the singular statement by one character, however, and is illustrated by the conglomerate parts of the piece. This illustration begins to gain impetus in the statements immediately following the aforementioned statement of love (and additionally in a subtle way before) when “Croak” goes on to reference the other character called “Words” in the overriding context of the piece by the incongruous name of Joe. This idiosyncratic naming is a symptom of miscommunication or apparent lack of ability to express oneself accurately and continues with “Word’s” attempts to justify love in words interrupted by “Croak’s” intermittent “Violent thump of club” (Beckett 24). This difficulty in communication also takes place between “Words” and “Music” as is the case when “Music” expresses itself,

MUSIC: Rap of baton on stand . Soft music worthy of
foregoing, great expression, with audible groans and
protestations – “No!” “Please” etc. – from WORDS. Pause.

CROAK (anguished.): Oh! (Thump of club.) Louder!

MUSIC: Loud rap of baton and as before fortissimo, all

expression gone, drowning WORDS' protestations.

Pause (Beckett 25).

In this example and the continual attempt at expression and the subsequent disjunctive reference, as well as taking into consideration the topic of expression, there becomes apparent an overriding theme or pivotal point around which the action and language of the piece oscillates. In this piece that theme is the apparent difficulty of expressing and communicating love.

Analysis of Piece 3 - *Play without a Title*, by Federico Garcia Lorca:

The next piece explored through the lens of elements is the unfinished, *Play without a Title*, written by Federico Garcia Lorca in 1936. García Lorca wrote little poetry in this last period of his life, declaring in 1936, "theatre is poetry that rises from the book and becomes human enough to talk and shout, weep and despair." (Maurer, 2001). This movement from poetry to theater or poetry as theater makes his work relevant to the discussion of the poetic play. This piece is of particular interest as it is here that he most disrupts the boundary between the stage and the real-world auditorium space.

In *Play without a Title*, the play form is disrupted in that the characters are those not normally present on stage in a play such as the "Prompter" (of lines), the "Director"s, the "Voice", and the "Male" and "Female Spectators" 1 and 2. Also the parameters of the stage are expanded beyond that of the actual stage into the offstage realm. This is exemplified by the "Voice" speaking from some undetermined location offstage as well as the "Male Spectator 1" who speaks from the Orchestra and then, shortly after, as he's

leaving. There is also the case of the "Youth" who speaks from a box in some location in the audience.

Conventions of the play form are also disrupted when the scene changes to become a play within a play. The first indication of this happens when, as stated in the stage directions, "Three heavy blows are heard and a curtain falls. On it is painted an improbable place" (Lorca 79). The transformation of place as set change happens again when "Actress" prompts the change by proclaiming, "...but Lady Macbeth is something else" (Lorca 81), whereupon, "(She takes off her white wig and reveals a black one. She discards her large black cape and appears in a fiery red dress. The back curtain rises on a gloomy stone cloister with fantastic trees)" (Lorca 81), and follows with a sort of enactment or reference to her secondary character, starting with the statement that, "Yes, Lady Macbeth exists, and what's more, now you're afraid of me. (The light changes slowly into blue moonlight) Because I'm beautiful, because I live forever, because I'm fed up with blood" (Lorca 81).

Language and referentiality, in "Play Without a Title," is most prevalent in terms of consistent disruption of the traditional play. This fact is apparent in the first line of the piece, "Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm not about to raise the curtain to entertain an audience with some word-game or panorama..." (Lorca 73). This statement sets the stage, as it were, for the self-referential element to follow. There are continual references to the piece itself as it is occurring and in terms of its own context.

The various characters of the piece make self-references to their context as in the case of "Male Spectator 1" when, in response to the preceding monologue by the "Director", he proclaims, "(from the orchestra): Tear off the roof" (Lorca 74), which is,

of course, in reference to the actual roof of the theatre in which the events of the piece are taking place. This self-reference within the piece to its contextual landscape continues throughout in such forms as, for example, when the "Youth" says to the "Director", "At this rate, you'll have no audience left" (Lorca 76), in response to the "Director"s graphic description of the true story of a dead woman and her children. The "Director" throws out references to the setting of the piece as well such as in the case of the off-hand challenge to the "Servant", "Scared of stage scenery" (Lorca 77)? The "Director"s reference to the actual set continues when he shouts, "Give us some light here, please, and raise the curtains" (Lorca 81).

This reference does not stay within the context of the stage, however it does begin to reach beyond the set and into the actual world in which the stage is set. In other words, the context extends into the landscape of the world at large. First the reference to the stage lights turns into a broader demand when the Director proclaims, "What's going on? Turn all the lights on. Light up the lobby" (Lorca 82)! This reference to the outside world takes shape and is alluded to in an ambiguous statement by the Servant who fearfully protests, "It's that I'm scared. I have to jump through the fog that's all over the floor and there are those two big birds up on the skylight" (Lorca 79). In this instance, the birds may or may not be actual birds, and the reality of the situation is unclear. This reality becomes clearer, however, by the infiltration of the outside world into the already stretched context of the suspended reality of the stage. It is not long before the outside world begins to greatly influence the context of the piece as "Male Spectator 1" observes when he states that, "The military must have taken over the streets, and won't let anyone through" (Lorca 82), in response to "Female Spectator 1's" worried desire to leave for

home which she expresses when she pleads, “Let’s go. I’m worried about the children at home alone” (Lorca 82).

It is this infiltration of the reality outside of the context of the piece that lends a real and relevant aspect to the words being presented. This is illustrated when the "Prompter" asks, “What’s to be done about the economics of the theatre” (Lorca 82), and then, not wanting to hear the response, pleads, “please, get me some cotton to stuff in my ears” (Lorca 82). The "Director" responds that it is the sound against which one might wish to protect oneself with cotton “That’s the sound of real blood” (Lorca 83)! The "Director"s attempt is made more clear by assertions such as, “You need spotlights so strong they’d burn and cut the heart out of the person telling lies” (Lorca 78).

In this sense, it is the actual words spoken which are also an emphasis within the piece. The language of the piece is “prompted” and referred to in various ways. This emphasis on the word’s being spoken within the context of the actual piece is illustrated in a self-referential manner in the beginning of the piece, in the "Director"s monologue. He states that, “The director knows how to write good poems, and I think he does well enough” (Lorca 74). The language of the piece continues to be brought to light and referenced by the actual characters as they perform within their both insular and expanded context as is the case when the "Female Spectator 1" responds to her husband, "Male Spectator 1"s, wish to exit the scene because of his reservation toward the "Director" and his worry that, “This chap’s going to end up saying something abominable” (Lorca 76). The "Female Spectator" responds by saying to her husband, “I don’t want to go. His line interests me” (Lorca 76).

There are contradictory voices within the piece, that don't necessarily agree with the message that the character of the "Director" is attempting to bring forth but that actually illustrate the point. This is the case with the character of the "Youth" when it is stated that a theatrical voice or, "That voice that just rang out for a second time has moved me more than any one real and about to die" (Lorca 77). The "Director" illustrates the fickle condition of theatre as a response in stating that, "Tomorrow you'll be dressed as a beggar, a fine lady, and the next day you'll be the serpent in a fable by some tricky poet" (Lorca 80). The "Actress" actually agrees in this case with the "Director" in asserting an emotional condition of the world and relating it to herself in the lines, "I would sing you the most beautiful lie. Me – I like the truth too, for a moment, no longer. Truth is ugly, and if I tell it they'll throw me out of the theatre." (Lorca 81).

Time, space, and matter is presented here largely in spheres of context. The space encompassing the stage of the piece is continually being expanded by including locations such as the orchestra pit, theatre boxes, and the general audience as alternative seating for characters, or more accurately as seating for spectators who are become included in the cast. The space of offstage is also included in the realm of the context of the piece due to a "Voice" calling from offstage a number of times short phrases such as, "Lorenzo! Lorenzo darling" (Lorca 76)! The sphere of context is greatly expanded when reference to the outside world or the real or actual world begins to take place. An example of this reference to the outside world occurs when the "Stagehand" responds to "Female Spectator 1's" distress. She is worried about her children being home alone subject to the rising revolution and he promises to venture out into the turmoil to deliver a message in saying, "Don't be afraid, senora. I'll go myself. I'll dodge the bullets and tell them you're

safe and sound” (Lorca 85). This reference to the outside world is furthered by comments such as that of the "Male Spectator 1" who, in dialogue with the "Director", states, “I’m too close to reality to take you seriously” (Lorca 75). The "Director" replies, "Reality. Ha. So you know all about reality? Listen here....Four caskets are waiting in the window for four of us creatures listening to me now, and maybe there’s one – just maybe! – one that’ll be filled before dawn, not after you leave this delightful little place" (Lorca 75).

The link between these spheres of context within the piece can be found in the "Director"s opening monologue in which he states, "Let me warn you, in all humanity, that nothing is made up. Angels, shadows, voices, snow-lyres, and dreams do exits and fly among you – real as any lust, the coins in your pocket or the latest cancer in the lovely woman’s breast or the salesman’s tired lip" (Lorca 73). It is here that the realm of the theatrical context and that of the real or outside world come together and are justified in their relation to one another. In this light the spectators can participate in a play, have props imposing threat, and have the strife of a revolution happening in real time in the real world enter into the text of a play as it is taking place.

Play without a Title uses character and voice in interesting ways to illustrate the spheres of context included in the piece. The "Director" outlines some of his intent and what is to come in his monologue at the beginning of the piece. He states, in reference to a previous portion of the monologue and to his point, "The spectator feels safe because he knows the play’s not going to be about himself; but how great would it be if he were suddenly called onstage and made to speak, and the sunlight of the stage burned through that trapped-looking white mask of his" (Lorca 74).

Throughout the piece there is an awareness of character roles and their relation to the outside, real, or tangible world. Again the "Director" states his opinion on the matter of the limited role of the actor or actress and expresses his wishes in addressing "Male Spectator 1". He points out, "You're not in the theatre. Because they'll come and break down the doors. And so we'll be saved. There's the terrible smell of lies in here, and actors in our plays say only what they're permitted to say aloud in front of frail young women, while stifling their real anguish.....anyone who'd rather not listen, let him plug up his ears" (Lorca 76). This wish expressed by the "Director" for real people to be present in the performance is fulfilled in the sense that the cast consists largely of "characters" not traditionally part of a cast, such as "Male Spectators" and "Female Spectators", a "Youth" who speaks first from a box in the audience, "Prompter", "Servant", "Actress" in a self-referential sense, "Stagehand", and "Worker".

It seems to be not only the desire of the character of the "Director" but also the intention within the piece to refer to the outside world. It would seem to be almost entirely necessary to look to the outside sphere in order to find truth both in the voices of the characters and in the context of situations. This interest in the outside world, or the sphere outside of the stage, can be looked upon through the lens of the theme or pivotal point of the piece. In this case the theme appears in the "Director"s monologue at the onset of the piece when he states, "I'm not about to raise the curtain to entertain an audience...and make you believe that that's what life is all about. No. The poet with all his five senses in perfect shape will now have – not the pleasure but the sadness of disclosing to you tonight a little corner of reality" (Lorca 73).

This theme of portraying as real a picture as possible becomes self-referential

when stated in such a way as by the "Director" when he goes on to say that, "Reality is where the director begins because he doesn't want you feeling you're in the theatre but out there in the street." (Lorca 74). The piece is concerned with being as close to the real sphere and the society from which it springs as possible, which is illustrated in the exchange between the "Actress" and the "Director",

ACTRESS: No, let nobody in. They'll break the real dishes, the fake
books, the delicate glass moon. They'll spill the marvelous elixirs
preserved through the centuries and they'll destroy the
rainmaking machine!

DIRECTOR: Let them break it all!

ACTRESS: They'll leave your stage in utter ruins, my darling.

DIRECTOR (to the PROMPTER): I've said I want the doors left open. I
won't have real blood spilled near the wall of lies (Lorca 82).

It is apparent that the endeavor of *Play without a Title* is to emphasize the role of the theater. True to being a poetic play, the piece portrays and brings forth the difficulty of the conflict between the reality of the actual world and the staging of a constructed reality. The truth inherent in this conflict and desire to unite the worlds is spoken by the DIRECTOR when he states, "Here, right here! Let the truth be told on all the old stages. Plunge daggers into the old monopolists of your daily bread and olive oil. Let the rain drench the backdrops and wash away all the old scenery" (Lorca 87-88).

Analysis of Piece 4 - *Mephisto*, by Frank O'Hara:

Mephisto, by Frank O'Hara, published in *Selected Plays* in 1978 in the U.S., is another piece which may be seen through the same lens as the others, beginning with form. The author, Frank O'Hara is a poet who is considered a leading figure in the New York School of artists. O'Hara endeavored in his writing to portray life's immediacy. He felt that poetry should be "between two persons instead of two pages." (American Council of Learned Societies, 1999). In this way, he is an innovator of form as well. The form of the piece is disrupted or innovated in a number of aspects. One of these is that the characters, or at least two out of three of them, are quite unlikely as characters in a traditional play. "A Cloud" is not what is normally thought of as a speaking part, nor is "A Multitude". Another aspect of the piece's form, which is not the norm is that of the acts being unusually short. This is especially true in act I where the act is only two lines of strange narrative depicting an entire scenario of, "One thousand eight orang-utangs in the corridor of the Hotel Surprise. A pearl necklace falls on them. They die noisily" (O'Hara 71). The next act, while quite short in length, also displays a different sort of disruption being written, not in prose but in lyric form, in a very apparent sense under the character of "A Cloud" as well as under the character of "A Multitude" (though to a lesser degree).

It is not only the contents of the acts that is unconventional, but also the titling of one out of four of them, the act after act 2 being entitled, "Act 2, Scene A". It seems illogical that what follows in the act would justify its being made its own scene pinned on to act 2, but somehow it is not out of context in relation to the rest of the piece. There is a form of consistent disjunctiveness throughout the piece. The aforementioned act also

uses a more lyrical form as does the act 3 that follows.

This use of poetic form is a disruption of expectation and highlights the poem aspect of the hybrid in and of itself, although it goes further in the context of the piece to be disrupted even as a consistent lyric form. The poetic lines in the latter three acts differ from one another, the most obvious difference being between act 2, scene A and act 3. The more common lyrical form using relatively regular line breaks is found in act 2, scene A throughout as in the lines, "tell me so, the blue lids of the lake. / I asked my dancing partner to take... (O'Hara 72). In contrast, act 3 disrupts that type of lyrical form and displays contrasting sprawling lines alternating with extremely short lines. The emphasis is more on the beginning of the lines than on the ends, which is more commonly used in line breaks. An example of this disrupted form can be seen in the lines,

yellow will? It is tugging at my life, yet I hear only the
far –
fetched pace-setters who are covered with hair. I regret
them (O'Hara 73).

This certain form of disruption leads to language and referentiality. The lyric disruptions of the traditional are actually not really disruptions within this specific piece because of the fact that most of the piece consists of this tendency toward lyric language. So the use of lyric language is both a disruption in terms of genre but also a fulfillment of the overriding poetic aspect of the hybridity of the piece. Considering the context or sphere of the inner workings of the piece, more subtle changes in the language from act to act can be considered disruptions. Such a disruption is between acts 1 and 2, as was

discussed earlier, and between act 2, scene A and act 3, which has also been indicated.

Although perhaps a more precise picture of the difference in language between the former two acts might be in a second difference in the lines of poetry found in act 3. The line breaks found there are different in length, but also the line breaks are emphasized differently. In act 2, scene A, the line breaks seem to assist something of a loose end rhyme. This is in contrast to act 3 where the line breaks are designed to shift the emphasis onto the beginning of the line where a majority of the word play takes place. An example is in the lines, "you know. The scrubbing that the sailors hear. Do you / know the..." (O'Hara 72).

The self-referential is even further present in terms of the character called "A Multitude" which actually illustrates its own name in the nature of the language it delivers. This is apparent in the lines,

It is difficult to see which thing hanging in
the air she is, when you have no dime for the revolving
telescope. All the advertisements were wrong, I gave
her to my son and she was not the moon (O'Hara 72).

These lines contain and hold space for multitudes of thought, perspective, and reality within them.

The very lines creating a multitude of space by illustrating a reality that contains disparate elements leads to time and space and the translation of language to the tangible in terms of temporality, the spatial, and the material. How this is present within the context of the piece may be equated to the concept of 'negative capability' that is emphasized within the artistic community of the Beats, with which O'Hara was

associated. This term denotes the possibility of holding multiple elements simultaneously without detracting from any one element even though they may be contradictory. The narrative aspect of the language within act I and the use of the present tense lends itself to being taken at face value as being a depiction of what is actually happening within the sphere of the piece. It may be assumed that, "One thousand eight orang-utangs in the corridor of the Hotel Surprise" (O'Hara 71), do actually exist within this context. Again in act 2 "A Multitude" refers to what could be a figure present within the piece when it states, "She is damned, that dancer, for her lack of energy / and her understanding of arrivalism" (O'Hara 72). Although, there is perhaps a more indisputable assertion of a tangible presence of the actual or real in the beginning of act 2, scene A in the stage directions asserting that there is actually, "The sound of not-very-warm hair in curlers" (O'Hara 72), happening in the immediate time and space of the sphere of the piece.

In this piece, character and voice seems particularly closely associated with language and referentiality. The language is tied to the characters, which are in turn self-referential in terms of their own language. This self-fulfilling cycle can be looked at more closely as the nature of the poetic, or disrupted, language of the piece, which differs among its acts as well as its characters and points to different content within each act. In other words, the language may be self-referentially fitting its own message introduced by the name of the character who speaks the language. To illustrate this, in the first act there is no character named who would speak the lines, which may account for the language being more narrative and really more like stage directions than dialogue. In act 2 the character speaking is "A Cloud" which seems to influence the tone of the lines. "A Cloud's" soliloquy is a bit more floating and whimsical

than the preceding act's lines, although the lines of act 1 are also surreal. An example of the whimsical and lofty nature of the lines spoken by "A Cloud" can be found especially in the first four lines,

A vision has been spied
of loveliness in gypsyland
and no one knows what to do.
Do you? I took her by the hand... (O'Hara 71).

The second act is the only one of four that contains two characters, the second of which is named "A Multitude". There is a change of tone in the lines of "A Multitude" as compared to those of "A Cloud" that seems befitting of the character's name. This change of tone for "A Multitude" could be characterized as being more cerebral, although still quite surreal, illogical, or disjunctive. In act 2, scene A, "The Watercress Troubadour" delivers a lyrical soliloquy that infers a musical quality in its language and also includes direct reference to music as in the lines,

I heard the wind of the
hounds, of the hounds into
the heart, the most musical ones. It
was a very giggly evening without... (O'Hara 72).

In the last act, there is no character named to deliver the lines. The language of the lines is both lyric and prose-like. The most lyric portions of the lines seeming to conjunct at the beginning of each line and trail off as a line of prose toward the end of each line. There also seems to be a self-referential element to the content of the act in relation to its language and form. This self-reference is not entirely clear,

although a sense of it can be gleaned from lines such as, “I tend to think that the brevity of the season is that white recall... (O’Hara 72). In these lines there would appear to be a reference to brevity as the line trails off and then snaps back, illustrating its own reference to brevity by its short next line. Furthermore, in that short line, the actual word, “recall” focuses attention on what might have preceded. Additionally, the actual length of the lines go into longer, more drawn out thoughts, however disjunct, and follow with very short punctuations that call attention to themselves.

There is also the actual voicing of the lines of each character. It is assumed that these lines are being spoken, however it is also possible that these lines cannot be spoken as they are associated with characters that represent entities which do not normally speak, such as clouds and the concept of multitudes. In this way the characters are further self-referential because of the apparent contradiction in the purpose they serve within the piece. In this way, the characters do not necessarily behave in the way they do traditionally in a play. They are conceptually deconstructed and their purpose is altered into a more poetic role.

The contradiction of purpose could also be viewed as an illustration of the theme of 'negative capability' that inhabits the piece. When used as a lens through which to view the entire piece, the theme seems to encapsulate or unify disparate parts that tend to want to assert themselves as disparate. The tension of suspended belief as the context of the piece floats like clouds and is sounded as though by a troubadour. This tension, although not logical or sequential, could be seen as strife or as negative in a contradictory or burdensome sense. However, the same tension could be seen as a result of a multitude of disparate elements and as a challenge to hold space for all of them without adhering to or

detracting from any one particular element. Anyone could be, “damned...for her understanding of arrivalism” (O’Hara 72), or damned for a limited perspective. Another option is that anyone could arrive at a place more or less able to understand a piece that pivots upon itself and its multitudes. An appreciation of this point may constitute the theme or pivotal point of the piece.

Analysis of Piece 5 - *Goya's L.A.*, by Leslie Scalapino:

In *Goya's L.A.* was written by Leslie Scalapino and published in 1994. Scalapino was a poet, experimental prose writer, playwright, essayist, and editor. At times she has been associated with the Language poets. She felt linked closely with the Beats poets and generated a body of innovative work, the inter-genre piece being of particular interest here. In her piece, *Goya's L.A.*, the author has designed very specific parameters for the sphere of context in which the piece exists. The form is in disruption from the beginning, starting with the author's introduction in which Scalapino states her intention to present the, "Text as Visual." Although the parameters are explicit, the piece itself is intricately crafted to be irrevocably disrupted. It is self-referential, existing in multitudes while nowhere, whispered into the disembodied ear, and ultimately self-fulfilling in that having come to the end of it, there is a sense that nothing has taken place that was other than an exceptionally well-crafted emphasis on the tendency of the mind to project upon memory. This is a memory of having experienced myriad spheres of deconstructed form, language, experience, perspective, and self.

One example from each of the five elements should be sufficient in this case because this piece is so thoroughly wrought with the fifth element in mind. In other

words, it exists with its own fulfillment in mind, and all its disparate parts contribute to and oscillate around that projection. Firstly, the form may be exhibited in the statement by the character called “Defoe” who is referring to the preceding dialogue addressing the form of a sumo as the performance, or this piece, which are interchangeable elements, when she states, “(explaining sweetly): It’s a form. There aren’t our characteristics. At all. In the place” (Scalapino 57). This statement refers to form and thus illustrates the form as it has been laid out previously, in reference to the sumo form.

The preceding statement also shares that of language or referentiality by using language to point directly at the form and reference it. This language and referential element can be further seen throughout. An example is on the same page when “Defoe” reflects the previous statement by “Dead Souls” that, “People are running aimless in a crowd” (Scalapino 57), in stating herself that, “One induces movement that is minute and has no function” (Scalapino 57). In this instance one character refers to another using language and thus also expresses the passage of time. This passage of time is involved in the tangible in terms of time, space, and matter, bringing the poetic language of the hybrid into a field of performance subject to the real world. The reference to movement also indicates presence within the sphere of the piece. Objects are tangible within that context and have the capability of movement through space, no matter how minute – or possibly that movement takes place in a designated amount of time such as a “minute”.

There is also character or voice, to consider, present in the former reference in the use of the word “one.” It is a question to whom that word is referring. Is it referring to a character within the sphere of the piece, or is it referring to people in a general sense and

outside of the context of the piece, involving itself with the actual or real world sphere?

This also brings into question who is considered a character in the piece. The sumo is continually referred to throughout as a frame of reference but does not speak, although if the “Slide,” or series of photographic images, can be considered a character, then by association, sumo is a voice of “Slide” due to its being shown in “Slide” throughout. Sumo is presented as a visual image as is illustrated in the delivery by “Dead Souls” in which are the lines,

Sumo sagging on the thin surf floating carcass
with the red rim is head on it.
bulb on wave
that’s thin (Scalapino 57).

It is this importance placed on the visual which is the key to bringing the text alive or making it more tangible. The piece tends to project associations and verbal or visual reflections upon visual cues. This can be seen in the statement by “Shadow-Akira” when he responds to having witnessed images of the sumo presented by “Dead Souls” and then “Defoe” who relates the lines, "Peddling on the bicycle on the surf in the sun / and the sumo is floating in it" (Scalapino 57). “Shadow-Akira’s” statement follows as such, "seen at side says in Japanese Dead Souls’ / next passage before she says it" (Scalapino 57).

The previous statement introduces the idea of the theme of the piece. This is also the most gravitational or central element. Especially in the case of such a tightly rendered self-fulfilling piece as *Goya’s L.A.*, the fifth element is like a guiding light or a tether that shapes the other elements involved. The previous elements could all be found upon one

page of a lengthy piece, relative to the average length of a poetic play, however in order to fully grasp the theme or essential meaning in the piece, the piece must be experienced and all of the elements displayed in different scenarios in relation to the essential point. It is only possible to glean a sense of the pivotal point then by traveling through a bit of the oscillation and noting statements that encapsulate the meaning in small parts. This must be done while adapting slightly in relation to the other elements so that the meaning might be brought in as relevant to the piece. Here are some statements that affirm the tether,

Dead Souls: Action isn't the mind yet when brought to its occurrence it
Is (Scalapino 43).

Officer: ...It's interesting how you have to explain what you see, in
order to convey it, more (so) than what you think (that is, how you
view some issue.) (Scalapino 47).

Dead Souls: ...In those exact minute motions; these have a rhythm of
presentation in this that occurs in spurts and not planned. When it
is subject to only its movement, it has no other reflection. It isn't
social perception; or rather, is it only then. What's that? The
illusion is cultivated that events have already occurred and the
response people have and have had to these. It isn't arising there.
(Silent slide)

There's no center
so we occur first (Scalapino 50).

Muscular Dove: ...Conformity is not a relation to one...

(Scalapino 50).

Defoe: ...In that, if the market is memory – still – actions have no
memory (Scalapino 65).

Akira: ...The flesh has a certain time; that's its realm that's temporal. It
makes that sense. The intellect can know transience but the body
can't (Scalapino 65).

Defoe: ...They say that's how events occur. The space collapses and is
one (Scalapino 66).

There is little distinction between the elements involved in the case of this piece,
however it should be acknowledged that this piece includes various distilled disembodied
parts of form, language, context, and voice, while simultaneously not insisting that the
piece or performance of the piece happen or exist in a tangible sense at all. In fact the
space of this page might be used as a canvas on which to project one's own context,
memory of context, and implications thereof. The five essential elements of the poetic
play converge and fulfill themselves as a whole experience here, each element
contributing to the other and to the overall experience, in this case an experience of
questionably coherent reality or the reality of questionable coherency.

Now that these five pieces have been analyzed in terms of the five essential
elements of a poetic play and it has been discussed how and in what ways the pieces are
poetic plays, it should seem obvious that something is missing. That missing component
is the performance of the pieces. It is something of an anomaly why this component is at
least very lacking in terms of its potential, and actually is usually totally absent. These
pieces, as they have been written more in the realm of the poetic as far as the culture of

artists from out of which they are generated, have not been explored nearly as much as they could be in terms of their performativity.

Regarding the need for an expanded exploration of the performativity, Fiona Templeton, who is a seminal text-based performance artist currently practicing in the UK and U.S., gives her thoughts in an interview I conducted with her in May of 2013 on the topic of Poets Theater. She has been involved with the Poets Theater platform within which have been generated many of the pieces I am arguing are distinct as their own form called the poetic play. Of Poets Theater, Templeton states that "there's both a generic idea of what that could be, in other words theater by a poet, or there's a kind of local idea, which is the...mostly San Francisco based, certainly United States based, movement of people who are poets who make theater, but within a certain aesthetic set of criteria, and I've had some issues with some of what those criteria are."⁸ She goes on to say that it these criteria are not expressed by everyone involved in Poets Theater, "but one of them is a kind of deliberate amateurism in performance. And I don't see....what that's got to do with poets making theater." It is this amateurism in the performance that she questions. She explains that from the perspective of Poets Theater, "some of the idea is that you don't need the production material to make or to present performatively, but I think if you deliberately do that it may kind of be working against the best interests of some of the work." I agree with Templeton's assertion that "I think it suits some work to be presented in a kind of 'tongue and cheek, I'm not really doing this sort of way', but that only, I think, suits a kind of limited spectrum of the work."

In coming to a fully realized form of the poetic play so that its parameters can be

⁸ See Appendix for full interview with Fiona Templeton

identified, it is important to look closely at the two forms that contribute to the hybrid, the poem and the play. Each of these contributing forms has two major modes or platforms in which it exists. The poem exists on the page as a text as well as in the reading of the poem. The play also exists on the page as a score and can additionally take shape as a theatrical performance. Consideration of all of these forms combined draw an expanded sphere of possible expression through the hybrid form of the poetic play.

Concerning the poetic play as a hybrid, these two forms are in dialogue with each other. Every form of language, or utterance, which, as Mikhail Bakhtin frames it in his work, *The Dialogic Imagination*, "participates in the "unitary language" (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" (Bakhtin, p.272) This tendency of forms of language to exist in context with other forms of language is further explained by Bakhtin in his statement that "The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance" (Bakhtin, p. 272). In this way the form of the hybrid is a sort of hyper-form of language in it's close interconnection of forms within it's own form.

Some of the most conceptually integrated examples of the poetic play form, including such works from the past few decades as Anselm Berrigan, a poet of the Beat Lineage's, *A Page Torn Out*, still have not been fully explored in terms of the reach of their possible performance. Most of the performative exploration of pieces by poets, whether actually poetic plays or more like avant garde theater, has happened within the social artistic platform of Poets Theater. Many of the pieces that came out of Poets

Theater have been poetic plays, but not the majority. The pieces that are poetic plays are pieces that are neither just experimental poems, nor are they just innovative plays, they are pieces that have been disrupted enough in both of their original forms and put back together meaningfully in parts to create an entirely new third thing, or true hybrid. It is as though the practitioner took a bag of elements of a poem such as rhyme, rhythm, image, line break, page orientation, and linguistics and a bag of the elements of a play such as narrative, introduction, stage directions, character, and epilogue; emptied them onto a table, and chose certain elements carefully to hang on the scaffolding of a chosen theme in order to speak to it.

This achievement of form is what I've heard referred to as the poetic play in the halls of my alma mater, Naropa University, a home of experimental poetics in Boulder, Colorado. Naropa began as, and continues to be, a living haven for the very practitioners who are producing such work. I have chosen to attempt to define what the work is and to identify examples that lean toward it and embody many of its tendencies.

In attempting to define the poetic play, I found I could not conceive of the entire form without the performative hand of the hybrid form having been explored further. So to remedy this hole in the form of the poetic play, I chose to make this project practice-based. I have created an original poetic play beginning with an initial text and have then performed it five times, one performative exploration emphasizing each of the five senses to create a history of its performative aesthetics.

Chapter 3 - Practice-Based Research

What I have been discussing so far has been the poetic play as it behaves on the page. Although I have found some textual examples, or works that display many tendencies toward being a poetic play, I have not uncovered examples of the performance of these pieces that go very far beyond playful reading or staging of the texts. I believe taking into account the breadth of contemporary performance, that the performativity that is inherent in this hybrid form, which includes the form of the play, can go much further than it has so far.

That is why I have created five pieces that are performative expressions of a pretext. My practice is an attempt to demonstrate the dexterity of the performative capabilities of an original text. The capability of the text can extend far in many directions, as Derrida exemplifies in his notion of 'arche-writing', which is "a process which underlies not only written but spoken language as well as thought, self and any activity taken to be text." (Fortier, 2002) I am framing my work within the discourse of the new discipline of conceptual writing, the seminal text of which was recently published by Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman in 2009.

The reason for framing my creative work in the form within the conceptual discourse, or borrowing their methodology of starting with what they refer to as the 'pre-text', is that I see a fully realized poetic play as employing, or having reached a standard of conceptuality. The language and self-awareness of a poetic play as being what it is rings true as a complete innovation. My poetic play series, "Portraits" started with a simple pre-text and becomes more and more like a realized poetic play as I gave shape to

its performativity. This is an inverse approach to what I've seen in my research, which is that most artists who have generated works in this form have emphasized the text. I feel it is necessary to explore the performativity of the poetic play because that is half of what it is. Therefore how could the poetic play be defined without examples of its potential in performance?

The performances within Poets Theatre have been supported within a lively community and are often beautiful theatrical renditions, however, they lean toward a more traditional or simplified version of theatrical performance. This chapter will be my effort to expand the sphere of the performance of the texts that can be argued to be poetic plays. I feel it is important to understand that there has been a congealing of tendencies toward a hybrid genre of performative text called the poetic play because of its context and what it can do as a dialogic form.

The poetic play is relatively new, having mainly taken shape in the later half of the 20th Century and in underground circles, which presents a challenge in discourse, but there is enough evidence and context to locate and explore its properties. Roland Barthes in his work, *Image, Music, Text*, asserts that, "there is now the requirement of a new object, obtained by a sliding or overturning of former categories. That object is the *Text*... The Text is not to be thought of as an object that can be computed.... the Text is a methodological field" (Barthes, 1977). This discourse is a turning of history and an endeavor to continue the continuous dialogue into and out of and back into and out of an emphasis on form as it alternately condenses and dissipates in the discourse. The fluctuation of the history of the discourse highlights the context of the text. This is stated by Barthes when he addresses the text as "the intertextual in which every text is held, it

itself being the text-between of which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text" (Barthes, 1977).

It is these realizations of portraits that constitute the process of realizing the hybrid form of the poetic play. Often in the poetic play, the text is emphasized, but not the expression or performance or realization of the text. For this reason half of the form of the poetic play is often in neglect. By increasing the emphasis on the half of the hybrid, which is its performative half, the entire hybrid form of the poetic play becomes subsequently more realized or fulfilled in its whole self. In laying down a foundation of cosmology for the form of the poetic play, I have given a starting point for a definition, however that definition emerges more fully through the practice of the form, or, as my methodological research question states, How can a dialogic practice-based investigation of the hybrid form of the poetic play through the five individual sense modalities assist in the aesthetic situating of, and subsequently the fully realized definition of, the poetic play?

These realizations have an overarching methodology stemming from the inquiry of Gertrude Stein and her addressing of the 'difficulties' that existed inherently within the form in which she was working as well as her addressing 'difficulties' as issues that existed in the world and addressing these 'difficulties' through the framework of the form in which she was working, namely the form of the play. Stein used form as a methodology on many levels, which is what I am continuing to do in my methodology in dialogue with her by addressing 'difficulties' or 'ideas' or motifs that exist within the form of the poetic play as well as addressing motifs that exists in the world through the form of the poetic play. In other words, as quoted from Gertrude Stein in Chapter 1, "The

business of Art as I tried to explain in 'Composition as Explanation' is to live in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present" (Stein, 1976).

This overarching methodological inquiry has facets of the investigation of the poem and the play. The essence of both forms involved are being explored as well as the ways in which they can come together in a meaningful way as a third thing or hybrid form. Questions must be asked such as what is a subject, character, stage direction, set, dialogue, voice, time, space, the page, text, and reading. It must be considered how we will adhere to these understandings, how will we break them, and why. Additionally, we ask whether the two forms will speak to each other in a dialogical relationship, how they will assist each other, disrupt each other, and for what reason. Finally, ultimately what is the effect?

In order to explore the inquiry and approach answers to these questions, I've created a series of pieces to illustrate what the form of the poetic play can do. The emphasis in this exploration is on the performative aspect of the poetic play. An explanation of these pieces follows.

To begin, each of my "Portraits" pieces exists on three levels. On the first level each piece is self-referential in that by being expressed through one of the five senses, each piece is contributing to a situating of its aesthetics, and subsequently its definition, as a form. In other words, each piece is self-referential in that it addresses, on its first level, a difficulty in the very form of itself as a method of innovating its form and thus making it more full and complete in order to offer itself to definition, which is related to Stein's approach in addressing the difficulty in the form of the play. On the second level,

which is established in the 'Pre-text' (a term defined in Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman's *Notes on Conceptualisms* as an original starting-point text in conceptual writing's processual and allegorical act) each of these pieces is an expression of the overarching motifs of the entire series of pieces entitled, "Portraits". The main overarching motif is that of nationalism. Each of the pieces, on the second level, are situated within a national context, which emphasizes the fact that we are all constantly situated within and subject to a nation no matter where we are on the globe at this point (with the exception of being on the open sea) and challenges our notions of nationality. What does it mean to be in a country? How does transition to a different country change the meaning personally and on a cultural scale? What are our expectations? How are they met? Broken? What is really actually present with each of us in each of these national contexts? What do we do with this? Are we able to see clearly, with no bias, what is really actually present and to act within that reality as subjects and as our identified selves?

On the third level of each piece, the magnetizing ideas (Hegel) or motifs find their form specific to that particular piece. The elements of the poem, the play, and the conceptual that comprise the hybrid piece center around and speak to these motifs. I will continue my project by briefly describing the levels of motifs of each of my pieces and the influences of the work. Then I will relate my creative process and subsequent expanded and more fully realized definition of the poetic play to the works of other practitioners in the field. This is in order to situate the form of the poetic play more fully with the other forms of art in the landscape and to gain a better understanding of the implications of the form and what it can do creatively and socially.

Pre-Text: "Portraits - Sketches":

"Portraits - Sketches" is what conceptual writing terms a 'pre-text'. Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman coin this term in their seminal work defining conceptual writing, *Notes on Conceptualisms*, in 2009. I chose to begin the series with a pre-text because I see the poetic play as having a high conceptual component and wanted to practice the expansion of its performative potential using a conceptual methodology. In this way, the performance of the form of the poetic play can delve into limitless possibilities in terms of expression through a spectrum of media and sensory exploration. With the performative aspect of the poetic play having this range of capability, it can be situated within the broader artistic discourse of various disciplines.

The pre-text is the starting point of an entire series of works entitled, "Portraits". This pre-text, called "Portraits - Sketches", is a collection of 100 sketches of the sensory experience of moments in time and space. Each "Portrait - Sketch" is a depiction of a scene in a landscape in terms of the sounds, sights, touch, smells, and tastes present within it. In many of these snapshots, there are also ideas woven through to contrast the impossible endeavor of capturing an entirely objective frame of reality.

I've called these sensory sketches of moments "Portraits" in an ironic sense to highlight the concept of idealism. This concept is influenced by Hegel's notion *Das Maass* in terms of the quantitative aspect of each portrait and the qualitative aspect of the content, which plays with the idea of a standard. Also, included in the conversation is Marcel Duchamp's expression in response to an imposed national standard of

measurement in his piece entitled, *3 Standard Stoppages*. His response was aligned with a feeling of dissatisfaction amongst Duchamp's peers regarding the notion of there being any such thing as an objective science. The piece was created by dropping three threads, each one meter long, from one meter off the ground onto three canvases. Then the threads were attached to the canvases to hold their random not-straight shapes they had attained in their drop. The lines of the strings were then cut along as templates to use as straightedges like those that draftsmen use. These straightedges were still one meter, but not as the standard would indicate. From an exhibition including the piece at Moma, it is stated in the catalogue that, "Duchamp's deliberately useless toolkit subverts standardized units of measure, while simultaneously poking fun at the scientific method. Though he glibly referred to *3 Standard Stoppages* as "a joke about the meter," his description of its outcome reads like a mathematical theorem: "If a straight horizontal thread one meter long falls from a height of one meter onto a horizontal plane twisting as it pleases [it] creates a new image of the unit of length" (Kuenzli, 1989).

Each portrait in my piece is either a sketch of a moment within the British, American, or French landscape and is an attempt to capture what is really, actually present in that moment. In *Landscape and Western Art* by Malcolm Andrews, Bernard Lassus is cited as having remarked that, "Landscape is a cultural reading that renews the concrete space and what surrounds us" (Andrews, 2000). "Portraits" addresses the difficulty of the identity in relation to the national standard within a culture. The irony is that the term 'portrait' tends to indicate that what is being portrayed is the quintessential version of something, such as Lincoln with an ax in front of an apple tree in the American lexicon, perhaps a fox hunt in the British, or an outdoor cafe in the French. However, in

these sketches, the sort of fanatical idealism, which I'm calling Nationalism, implied in the use of the term "Portraits" at the beginning of each portrayal, is juxtaposed with the mashed up reality of what is really, actually there in each moment. That they are situated within a National context emphasizes the fact that we are always in a country no matter where we are on the globe at this point, unless on the open ocean, and challenges our notions of 'nationality'.

The questions of what is a nation, what does it mean to be in a nation, how does it change personally and on a cultural scale to transition to a different nation, what are our expectations, how are expectations met and broken, what is really actually present with us in each of these 'national' contexts, what do we do with this, and are we able to see clearly with no bias what is really actually present and to act within it as ourselves are the inquiry this piece addresses. In this way the investigation through the Poetic Play, "Portraits" begins to address the Motifs of 'nationality' and of 'identity' and of locating a 'subject' within the context of nationality.

Each portrait includes the sensory experience of a moment in time and space, as well as often a narrative thread. Additionally, while each portrait is a specific piece, it also contributes to a whole as the narrative weaves through a period of time and a progression of spaces. This collection of "Portraits - Sketches" is the beginning of what I then apply a process of performing it five times. Each performative iteration emphasizes one of the five senses in the endeavor of establishing an expanded aesthetic history of the performativity of the poetic play.

Performative Iteration 1: "Portraits - Visemes":

"Portraits - Visemes" is a performance of the original text, "Portraits - Sketches". It is a performance in the sense that it is an expression of the pre-text emphasizing the sense of sound. The audio piece is in two parts, "The Sounds of Language" and "The Language of Sound". This investigation of the poetic play "Portraits" and its sound realization, "Visemes-Portraits" is also an investigation of the relationships between form and content in terms of narrative. As Roland Barthes is quoted in Hayden V. White's essay, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* in regard to narrative, it "is simply there like life itself...international, transhistorical, transcultural." (White, 1990). The narrative in "Portraits" runs through the frames of the form of this particular poetic play and addresses the universal inquiry into identity and social context. Again, the poetic play has elements of conceptual writing in it as conceived of by the controversial contemporary poet, Vanessa Place's investigation of conceptual writing in her recent book, *Notes on Conceptualisms*, in that, "Conceptual writing mediates between the written object which may or may not be a text) and the meaning of the object by framing the writing as a figural object to be narrated" (Place, 2009). In this way the aesthetics of the pre-text, which in the case of this investigation are the realizations through the five sense modalities of the poetic play, "Portraits", gives meaning and context and subsequently lends a more fully present communication of the form by adding to the motif of the subject's identity in the context of nationality or, perhaps contradictorily to the standard of nationality, what is actually present in the landscape in which the form is situated.

I consider my sound realization of the pre-text called “Portraits” to be coming out of the tradition of sound poetry with its origins in the avant-garde of the first half of 20th century beginning with breaking down the language or “pre-text” into syllables. Following the Second World War these initial innovations were built upon by such artists as Bob Cobbing and Henri Chopin who moved the focus away from the syllable and into the materiality of sound itself. These innovations have been picked up by practitioners of the developing hybrid forms, and continue by dealing with the materiality of sound. This intention to move more into the materiality of poetry is evident in Chopin’s incitement to “Get rid of all those bits of paper, whole, torn, folded, or not. It is man’s body that is poetry, and the streets.” (Rothenberg, 1998). I agree that it is the subject in its context of landscape and the subject’s ability to share communications with others through the senses that furthers the reaches of poetry and poetic expression. My investigation is in response to this incitement of materiality as well as much as it is a response to Stein’s deduction of the play as landscape. The sound piece, “Visemes-Portraits” as a soundscape is also in the landscape by way of Robert Grenier’s idea that “What now I want, at least is the word way back in the head that is the thought or feeling forming out of the ‘vast’ silence/noise of consciousness experiencing world *all the time*...I want writing what is thought/where feeling is/*words are born*” (Bernstein, 1998). In this way the sound piece “Visemes-Portraits” returns to the physical, sensory, and social landscape to be closer to the content of its text, to be re-contextualized in what the text communicates. In this way the text becomes “born” within the context of the senses, which are present within the subject as well as within the context of the social landscape of nationality.

In "Part I - The Sound of Language", the investigation is more the positioning of the sound of the language used in the pre-text of "Portraits" with the emphasis being on the a closer relationship with the text, more the "milieu" of the "pre-text", insofar as the text is actually being sounded in utterance by the subject in the landscape. Part II then goes further into the materiality of sound as sound being more a language in itself, a context of relative meaning in and of itself. "The Language of Sound" is a more direct realization of, or demonstration of, the difficulty presented in the content of the pre-text, that of portraying what is actually present in the landscape of the of context of nationality and locating identity within this context, in this case through a more direct experience of the present sense of sound perceived by the subject within the landscape of the national context.

A Methodology for a Soundscape, of "Visemes-Portraits" - Part I :

Regarding sound and poetry, Bob Cobbing states in his work *Some Statements on Sound Poetry*, "Poetry has gone beyond the word, beyond the letter, both aurally and visually...Gone is the word as the word, though the word may still be used as sound or shape. Poetry now resides in other elements" (Cobbing, 1978). Cobbing continues with his exploration of sound and poetry and the word by addressing, in the same source, further the implications of physicality and inter-relationship amongst the many aspects of the field of sound in the lines, "Materials are the micro-particles of the human voice which amplified, possibly transposed in speed or pitch, superimposed one, two or many

times, treated perhaps with a filter, echo or chopper, shaped maybe by editing, result in a piece no naked voice could achieve" (Cobbing, 1978).

This exploration of sound and method builds a framework of new form. These superimpositions simultaneously create, uncover, and ultimately constitute what can be conceived of as a form. Here, beginning with Cobbing's explorations of sound and poetry will be a methodology for the first part of a soundscape project entitled "Visemes-Portraits".

In creating "Visemes-Portraits", and in Part I in particular, the question of investigation being addressed is: What is the sound of language or the sounding of language? "Visemes-Portraits" Part I is a soundscape, or a realization and sound communication of the pre-text. The realization, true to its title, is the superimposition of two layers of sound, one layer of which is the utterance of the language of the pre-text and the other layer a field of soundscape from within the sociopolitical landscape of the UK. This soundscape of the UK is framed by a temporal utterance of either the word 'visemes' or the word 'portrait', which, when mixed together, create the effect of highlighted meaning and context.

The meaning of the word 'visemes' is the shape of the mouth as it forms a word. This shape acts as an active framing mechanism for language with the physical frame of the mouth realizing the utterance of language and acting as a liminal threshold between subject of communication and the sound, which comes from out of the frame and can be perceived by another subject within the landscape. The word "portrait" indicates a depiction of content. The portrait is content framed. The two concepts when combined are framed content. In this way, "Visemes-Portraits" is contextualized sound.

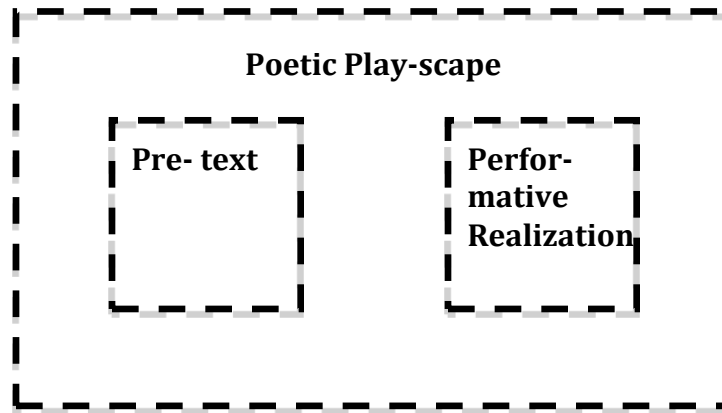
The first layer of sound is of a private interior soundscape leading into a public urban soundscape. The soundscape of the private interior space moves down a set of stairs, through a door and transitions onto the street near a canal in London. The soundscape continues while on a walk through the urban landscape. Additionally, the words visemes and portraits spoken at intervals in order to add a layer of framing or meaning to what is a sound realization of text and within the landscape.

The second layer of sound is an utterance of the language of the pre-text of portraits sketches. Each sketch is a frame of the narrative of the series of portrait sketches and each frame specifically is a reflection of a specific place in time in its sensory context. The language of each sketch is a reflection of the context of its landscape and in terms of the content of the form is a reflection of the inner and outer contexts of the subject insofar as the content consisting of both sensory perceptions as well as thoughts interjected in accordance with the overarching narrative. Each sketch is read aloud and aligned in a sequence in cadence.

The two layers of the sound of language are then superimposed upon one another. This superimposition is a dialogue between the text and the context, or the pre-text and the realization of the pre-text as is illustrated below within the “Active-frame” model of this dialogue illustrated below.

Active-Frame

Socio-Political/Artistic Landscape



Furthermore, in the larger sense, the question is raised, what is the context of these cultural frames or portraits? How do these frames within the “Active-frame” behave in dialogue? What comes from the dialogue? What is the sound of language? If form is context, then the superimposition of contexts contributes to locating the language of new forms or as John Cage states in *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, "The principle of form will be our only constant connection with the past. Although the great form of the future will not be as it was in the past, at one time the fugue and at another the sonata, it will be related to these as they are to each other" (Cage, 2006).

The form of the poetic play is a communication and the sound realization of “Visemes-Portraits” is part of a dialogue that in turn holds forms. This dialogue is, as Hal Foster states of form and its purpose, in *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, “a labor of articulation: to mediate content and form, specific signifiers and institutional frames. This is a difficult task, but not an impossible one.” (Foster, 1996). In the case of the form of the poetic play, “Portraits”, the content of the

form is addressing identity and its context with the framework of nationality. The poetic play form is marginal and so it is advantageous as a form of social and political investigation through its aesthetic realizations of the senses and in its play in various artistic media. This labor of articulation, or dialogue and communication, is a task addressed in Part I of the audio piece, “Visemes-Portraits”, which will continue to evolve in Part II of “Visemes-Portraits”. The investigation of this communication is an integrated component of the investigation of the overall text-based performative piece, “Portraits”.

A Methodology for a Soundscape – “Visemes - Portraits” – Part II:

To continue from Part I of the project, “Visemes – Portraits”, in which is emphasized the sound of language, the question of context remains a leading tool of investigation into the research question of How can the poetic play as a methodological tool be used to investigate the communicative capabilities of the performative act through the individual sense modalities? This section explaining the first performative iteration will be a bit longer than those that follow because the proceeding are based on the first, progressing in a series of iterations.

Seth Kim-Cohen in *In the Blink of an Ear* lends a point of entrance into the investigation through context in relation to “Portraits” as the, in many aspects conceptual, hybrid form of the poetic play and its sound realization, “Visemes-Portraits”, in his statement that "Conceptual art, “art about the cultural act of definition—

paradigmatically, but by no means exclusively, the definition of ‘art,’” [Peter Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 14] is the aesthetic mode of such questioning. In questioning how and why the sonic arts might constitute themselves, I hope to lead the ear away from the solipsism of the internal voice and into a conversation with the cross talk of the world" (Kim-Cohen, 2009). Through the sound realization of “Visemes-Portraits”, I also hope to bring the ear of the subject into the cross talk of the context of the landscape in relation to the pre-text and to the question of how the aesthetics or sensory realizations of the pre-text can reveal what remains of superimpositions of what is actually present in the landscape onto the concept of nationalism in the content of the pre-text.

Conversely to Part I, Part II of the audio piece, “Visemes-Portraits” contains more an emphasis on the language of sound. The active frames hold the forms in the dialogue between sound and context or meaning in relation to the language of the pre-text. It is the frame that both determines and is determined by the context and holds the content. Additionally, the frame is in dialogue with the content, it is an intersection of the meaning and the sounds, a liminal place of the language of the sound, a positioning lending communication between the perceived and the perception.

As the language of sound, Part II is more a positioning or contextualization of the sounds of what the content of the pre-text “Portraits” signifies. In this way, the poetic play text is again an allegorical communication as it points toward a further investigation of the materiality of sound in its realization of the pre-text. Part II is more an actualization of the soundscape of the content signified in the pre-text addressing national context.

The actualization of the soundscape was realized through positioning the subject directly in the landscape of the culture of the nation and collecting field recordings, which were then sculpted into the form of the realization. I chose to capture the sounds I encountered as I moved through the various landscapes within the American, British, and French urban and rural landscapes. I wanted to be a walking conduit for as broad a spectrum of experience within that landscape as possible. By addressing the content of the pre-text in this way, the realization is in dialogue with the text as well as in relation to Part I of “Visemes-Portraits”. In this way the subject encounters what is actually present in the landscape, which is superimposed with the idea of what would be there in terms of a national standard. When the subject is in the landscape encountering frames of form and content through the senses, what remains is communications of identity.

The method of the collection of audio material and the sculpting of the form is as follows. I recorded the particular soundscapes as a subject within the context of the landscapes from which I collected ten field recordings, used in the framing. Each of these recordings is involved then in a method of superimposition in order to create and to reveal the field of the soundscape.

In the process of superimposition I began with two tracks, which consist of the utterance of word “Visemes”, one having been recorded in an interior private space within the national context, while the other was recorded in the public exterior urban landscape of the national context. These were mixed together and then extended to create a line of sound. To the line of sound two more tracks were superimposed. These audio tracks were collected at Borough market in London and then given an echo and a Wawa effect to emulate the traveling of the parameter of that space, framing the space or

context, giving narrative. The fifth piece of audio is a relatively slow recording of the circling of the lip of a crystal glass holding a small amount of water, but mainly space, the parameter signifying the concept of “visemes” giving utterance to the sound it created. This track was extended and was mixed in at a low frequency along with another similar track of the same content although created at a faster speed and superimposed at a higher frequency while also extended to create a slightly different utterance of the framing. This utterance enacts upon the landscape and is in dialogue as an actual part of landscape and actual soundscape as well as being in dialogue with the various active frames of the complete soundscape of the sound realization of the pre-text.

For the additional three audio tracks in the frame, the contact microphone was used to frame a dialogue between the subject and the landscape, between the perceiver and the perceived, to achieve a physical location or point of perspective in relation to the material. It is interesting to note that in determining this point, the frame shifts, is transcribed, or re-transcribed. The perspective is re-positioned, the perceiver and the perceived are transposed, and objectivity is lost in place of relationship.

The additional three audio tracks consisted of the recordings of sound vibrations collected by the contact microphone. The use of the contact microphone framed the dialogue between the subject and the landscape by furthering the actual positioning of the subject in the landscape as a conduit of a material effect of sound. The first of these tracks was collected by placing the mic on an outside facing window within the stairwell of a building present within the national context. The second track was collected by holding the mic over my heartbeat as I watched and called to bunnies in a nearby field. The third was a field recording of the vibrations collected by placing the mic onto the

interior of a moving underground tube car. All three of these tracks were of differing aspects of the landscape of the national context in order to give as broad an investigation of the landscape as possible. These tracks yielded limited audible sound, but interestingly by the limited sound they did yield, the silence between the soundings was highlighted. These three tracks were copied in sequence and superimposed as space-specific elements giving context to the frame.

John Cage frames an investigation of silence and sound in dialogue with the landscape in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* in the lines, "For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not. Those that are not notated appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment" (Cage, 2006). He goes further to contextualize sound and silence in dialogue with other art forms when he states that the open doors exist "in the fields of modern sculpture and architecture. The glass houses of Mies van der Rohe reflect their environment, presenting to the eye images of clouds, trees, or grass, according to the situation. And while looking at the constructions in wire of the sculptor Richard Lippold, it is inevitable that one will see other things, and people too, if they happen to be there at the same time, through the network of wires. There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time" (Cage, 2006). Continuing in dialogue with the openness, when the shape of the word "visemes" is made with the mouth, there is space there. There is an utterance from out of the shape and which is in dialogue with the shape. There is sound there. The shape of the word "visemes" is the form or the framing, like the shape or the form or the framing of the sounds around the content. The

content is in dialogue with the sounds. The language is the context of the sounds, the meaning of the sounds. This is the language of the sounds.

Finally, the last audio track involved in the making of “Visemes-Portraits” Part II is what constitutes the portion of the soundscape that fades into the whole as a simple striking of the crystal glass 5 times. This striking of what was otherwise circled is a further possible interpretation of and actual participation with the landscape or, rather, an interaction with the subject located within the space on both an actual platform as well as within a conceptual framework in association with the notion of “visemes”.

From out of this investigation and method of superimposition, comes realizations and documentation of what remains of language. The documentation is of the landscapes of the forms and also of the dialogue between the forms. This dialogue is active in the spaces between the forms. As the theorist Elizabeth Grosz explains in *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, "The position of the in-between lacks a fundamental identity, lacks a form, a givenness, a nature. Yet it is that which facilitates, allows into being, all identities, all matter, all substance" (Grosz, 2001). This allowing of being opens the door to the landscape and to what is inclusive within it. This investigation is furthered by her question of, "What does it mean to reflect upon a position, a relation, a place related to other places but with no place of its own: the position of the in-between" (Grosz, 2001)? She goes on to answer her question when she states, "The in-between is a strange space, not unlike the choric space that Plato, in the *Timaeus*, posed as the condition of all material existence. For Plato, chora is that which, lacking any substance or identity of its own, falls in between the ideal and the material; it

is the receptacle or nurse that brings matter into being, without being material; it nurtures the idea into its material form, without being ideal" (Grosz, 2001).

Grosz' reflection upon places in relation to other places is fundamental to my notion of the "Active-frame" in its acknowledgement of relativity in dialogue. The "Active-frame" is an agent of hybridity and of bringing into being what comes of the dialogue. In the case of the investigation of the hybrid form of the poetic play, and in the case of "Portraits" in particular, the dialogue is of bringing the idea into its material form. More specifically in the case of "Portraits" the content of the text is addressing the difference between the standard of nationality and what is actually present in the frames of the landscape. These ideas are then brought into the landscape via the realizations of the senses in order to be more present within the landscape the form is addressing.

Grosz goes on to address the idea of "Being" in relation to the in-between in the lines, "It is itself a strange becoming, which is somehow, very mysteriously in Plato, the condition of all beings and the mediation of Being. There is a certain delicious irony in being encouraged to think about a strange and curious placement, a position that is crucial to understanding not only identities, but also that which subtends and undermines them, which makes entities both possible and impossible" (Grosz, 2001). It remains, that from out of the in-between comes the placement, the positioning of the content of the language of the forms inherent in the hybrid poetic play "Portraits". The content of the language of "Portraits" addresses the difficulty of identity and locating identity in relation to the standard of nationality.

In addressing the space of the in-between, Grosz states that, "The space of the in-between is that which is not a space, a space without boundaries of its own, which takes

on and receives itself, its form, from the outside, which is not its outside (this would imply that it has a form) but whose form is the outside of the identity, not just of an other (for that would reduce the in-between to the role of object, not of space) but of others, whose relations of positivity define, by default, the space that is constituted as in-between" (Grosz, 2001). Her addressing of form and boundary is relevant to my project on a few levels, such as the thematic level of the subject within a national landscape and the official boundaries there as well as the boundaries around a natural and foreign body.

Additionally, the space between is, in the case of my investigation using the poetic play as an agent of inquiry, where the dialogue takes place between the forms, out of which is formed the hybrid poetic play. Also in the case of my investigation of the communicative capabilities of the poetic play through realizations of the senses in the performative act, these dialogues yield realizations and, in the process, what remains as documentation of realizations. So while, within the framework of my investigation, the in-between might not have a form, it is in relation to forms and brings into being forms.

From the dialogic investigation of the communicative capabilities of the form of the poetic play pre-text through the sound realizations of "Visemes – Portraits", Part I the sound of language and Part II, the language of sound, this chapter will continue into an investigation of the realization of the pre-text of "Portraits" through the sense of sight in my original piece, "Portraits – Distillation".

Performative Iteration 2: "Portraits - Distillation":

In my performative piece, "Portraits - Distillation", I began with the sense of sight as it relates to the pre-text of "Portraits". The overarching theme of nationalism in the series, "Portraits", is present as a continuation of the narrative brought forward in the pre-text of "Portraits - Sketches". Nationalism is also present in the endeavor of capturing visual elements present in the actual landscapes where the material is gathered juxtaposed with the standard or national ideal denoted in the term 'portrait' of a respective country.

The performance aspect in this iteration is centered around the notion of the correspondence between stillness and movement, or stilling and unstilling. The piece is a distillation of the previous iteration, "Portraits - Visemes" and a video with photographs between clips. The video clips were taken during a weekend workshop symposium I participated in during the fall of 2010. The topic of the symposium was sound and was conducted by a seminal figure in British and American text-based performance, Fiona Templeton.

I used my digital camera to catch audio field recordings and chose to focus on sources of light as a motif for these recordings. When I went to edit them, I realized that I had captured what I needed for a visual piece in that they were visual portraits of what exists in concert with sound. Just as these clips were a catalyst for the sounds of the landscape, I wanted to put them together with the textual portraits of landscape I'd captured and worked into an audio piece in my previous "Portraits" iteration. So, I laid "Portraits - Visemes" down as a sound track and edited the clips into a narrative with still photographs placed intermittently. This created a sort of circling effect as the video

alternated between movement and stillness. In the stills were images of telephone wires representing the lines of communication between iterations and between text and image.

The lines of light in the video are lines that also mirror a connective dialogue between concepts or platforms of expression, this time being of sound and image with the images of light bars having been captured as a methodology for collecting soundscapes. More lines included in the video are found in the scenes of streetscape that I captured as I moved about the small town outside of Manchester where the workshop was being held. Some of these lines are the bars of a street divider with a plastic bag billowing connected to it, as though it is singing or dancing across the bars; the lines of a crosswalk, lines of blinking lights, the hard line of a silhouette of a building at dusk highlighted by the top edge of a streetlight, and the lines that form an 'x' in the center of a ball with a tell-tale fluttering behind it in the breeze.

Further images that included outlines of shapes that spoke to "Portraits" were interjected. Some of these included a giant image of a snowflake, a type of tropical tree, and a vinyl record. These shapes in the spinning sensation of halting, brings forward the concept of the sounds circling a source such as in the lip of the wine glass, which produced one of the underlying sounds in the previous iteration. There is the concept of the shape of the source determining the way that a form moves. From the audio to the visual and the synthesis of the two, came the desire to continue to layer the process into the third "Portraits" iteration, "Portraits - Scoring".

Performative Iteration 3: "Portraits - Scoring":

"Portraits - Scoring" is the performative iteration in the "Portraits" series that addresses the haptic, or sense of touch. It is an installation and gestural performance piece that was first performed at the Centre for Creative Collaboration in London in 2011. The piece involved projecting "Portraits - Distillation" through the top corner of a large hanging plastic sheet behind which I was a figure in black wearing large-frames black spectacles and drawing a site-specific interpretation of the projection as well as of the effect of the present space where the performance was taking place. The layering of the previous iteration onto "Portraits - Scoring" offered the opportunity to create a simultaneous 'score', serving the multiple purposes of recording the platforms of the past while capturing what was present in a shaping of the drawing as well as for this 'scoring' to be the drawing that would be a sort of road map for future iterations. The projection of "Portraits - Distillation" reverberated through the gallery audience while I drew a labyrinth on the spot without predetermining what I would draw. The labyrinth included divergences from its lines to include the shapes of the gallery scene I saw including the audience as I gazed through my spectacle and plastic sheet lenses.

The concept of a 'score' is one inspired by the artist, John Cage, who worked in various media including sound, image, movement, and text. Cage describes one of his multimedia works in his book, *Silence: Lectures and Writing*, in the following excerpt: "At Black Mountain College in 1952, I organized an event that involved the painting of Bob Rauschenberg, the dancing of Merce Cunningham, films, slides, phonograph records, radios, the poetries of Charles Olson and M.C. Richards recited from tops of

ladders, and the pianism of David Tudor, together with my Julliard lecture, which ends: 'A piece of string, a sunset, each acts" (Cage, 2006).

He was later a member of the Fluxus art movement of 1959-1978. In the Fluxus art movement one of the main concerns was to eliminate the boundary between art and life through various methodologies. Cage was interested in scores and playing with constraints, particularly methods of chance, such as using the IChing to make determinations in the work and leave the outcome open. For many of his works, he wrote event scores that would shape the piece as it progressed. My "Portraits-Scoring" uses this idea of constraints and open-ended reflection upon the present determining the way the piece takes shape.

I then took the drawing that resulted from the piece as documentation of the performance and as an element of the piece itself. Additionally the drawing was a bridge from that iteration to the next, acting as a score or platform for the next iteration, "Portraits - Memory".

Performative Iteration 4: "Portraits - Memory:

"Portraits - Memory" is an iteration focused on the sense of smell, or the olfactory. The sense of smell can be associated with memory as a trigger for memory or vice versa. On the level of the entire series, again, "Portraits - Memory" is a continuation of the expression of the pre-text, which deals with a comparison between the ideal or limited notion of what should be present within a national context and what is actually there. In the case of "Portraits - Scoring", the immediate context was a cooperative

gallery space. So I chose to include the space along with the audience in the drawing of the labyrinth and also to interpret the pre-text into a contextualized form in the transition of the narrative from the "Portraits - Scoring" iteration to the "Portraits - Memory" iteration.

This translation of text speaks to the notion that, as is stated by Amelia Jones in a conversation with Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein in the collection, *Performing the Sentence - Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, "The very idea of a person performing an act (or acts) self-consciously as "art" is already what Derrida would have called a "parergon" - it is already a conceit, not to mention the structure of the gallery or performance space where the action is performed" (Thun-Hohenstein, 2014). This space is one that is characteristic of the customs of a culture, a nationally flavored context for displaying work. It is also an example of very clear constraints. I took the shape of putting the pre-text "Portraits - Sketches" into the form of the label that went next to the photographs on the wall of the exhibition at the gallery where the performance took place. The form of the label next to a photograph in an exhibition often includes designations along the left margin such as, 'artist name', 'title', 'year', 'dimensions', and 'medium'. These designations are constraints that I could play with in terms of content and line breaks and can be a nod to character designations as each one is followed by a colon. So, in this case, the 'dialogue' of the 'characters' is the content of the poetic sensory reflections of the "Portraits - Sketches".

I took these transformed portraits texts and turned them into a book of 100 portraits entitled, "Portraits - Captions", which was put out by Contraband Book in 2013. I consider my translation of the previous performative iteration into a text to be a product

of the Conceptual Writing methodology I employed in my overall methodological exploration. This translation back into text is what is called a 'post-text' by Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman in their definition of Conceptual Writing. They state that "The "post-text" is the document necessarily created by the pre-text, though post-text may also refer to a primary text used in a hybrid as a secondary text" (Place, 2009). I consider this digression of form to be indicative of the type of expansive dialogue of which the poetic play hybrid is capable.

In addition to the publication of the captions, I used them as fodder for the following performative iteration, "Portraits - Memory". This iteration was based on looking more closely at what is actually in the present moment in landscapes and addressing the many questions that can arise. These questions might include notions of whether what is present is of a healthy or coherent quality. Also, it may be asked whether the way in which what is being viewed is changed by the viewer or the collective lens of the social norm.

This performative iteration, "Portraits - Memory" is again a layered performance installation. If the pre-text is present once more in this new form, it is a further example of the permeable relationship between the context of any texts, or what Julia Kristeva states as, "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality." (Kristeva, 1980). This intertextuality is claimed by Kristeva to be present in many forms such as literature, art, and music, that "all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (Sanders, 2006). In fact, "the impulse towards intertextuality, and the narrative and architectural *bricolage* that can result from that impulse, is regarded by many as a central tenet of postmodernism" (Sanders, 2006). To further apply this notion of intertextuality to

my methodology for the "Portraits" series, "the interleaving of different texts and textual traditions, which is manifest in the intertextual impulse, has also been linked to the post-colonial notion of 'hybridity' (Sanders, 2006). This relationship between what can be called texts can be an expression of hybridity.

The layering of texts as performative installation in "Portraits - Memory" present in the second part of the visual iteration, which repeats the first part of the video in reverse, is meant to induce memory. This memory inducement by retracing is an opportunity to re-member or to bring forward information that may have been taken for granted previously. The inducement of memory can bring forward certain smells. At UEL in 2012, I conducted an audience-inclusive event where I screened the "Portraits - Distillation" video and asked those present to write on another large piece of plastic, the smells that came to mind when the second half of the video began retracing images.

In the most recent performance of "Portraits - Memory" for the Greenpoint Open Studios show at the studio show of Stephen Ballamut in Brooklyn, NY, I used some of the "Portraits - Captions" and had them printed onto transparencies which I stitched onto a canvas using silver wire reflective of the lines of the telephone wires from the still images of "Portraits - Distillation" representing communication between platforms of expression. I then re-performed "Portraits - Scoring" followed by going outside onto the sidewalk and burning a large hole with a blow torch in the center of the labyrinth drawing from a previous performance.

The audience was asked to wear plastic glasses with the words of the smells from the audience-participation event at UEL written on the lenses. These lenses were to help

induce a collective memory or re-membering of the landscape present in the "Portraits - Sketches". In this way, the expectation is as Barthes describes in *Image, Music, Text*, in that "the role of the 'interpreter'... is called on to be in some sort the co-author of the score, completing it rather than giving it 'expression'. The Text is very much a score of the new kind: it asks of the reader a practical collaboration. Which is an important change, for who executes the work? (Mallarme posed the question, wanting the audience to *produce* the book)" (Barthes, 1977). The burning of the plastic sheet with the labyrinth was to bring forward a strong sense of the smell of smoke that can invoke memory of great change. The smell of the smoke of the burning of the previous lens can also be the result of re-membering collectively, which can ignition a passion and cause a cleansing change. The goal here is to take a new look at what is present in the landscape of society. Following the burning of the previous labyrinth and the hanging of the sheet that now had a large hole in it over the transparencies of some of the "Portraits - Captions", I read the Epilogue to "Portraits - Captions" and the Prologue to "Portraits - Negatives".

The "Portraits - Negatives" are texts which will be laid on top of the "Portraits - Captions" and will represent juxtaposition of black and white and allowing what was not apparent before to be seen. This new text is scheduled as being put out as another book forthcoming through Contraband Books. The "Portraits - Negatives" follow the creative performative iteration, "Portraits - Memory". The next performative iteration is "Portraits - Dendritic".

Performative Iteration 5 - "Portrait - Dendritic":

The final performative iteration in the "Portraits" series is "Portraits - Dendritic". The sensory emphasis of this fifth iteration is the gustatory. Taste is a sense that is strongly associated with emotion. In the case of the previous performance, "Portraits - Memory", the intention was to invoke strong emotions in the audience resulting in an ignition. The burning of the plastic was meant to represent the burning of the previous lens through which we collectively enact upon and view society. That fire had to be doused with water and cooled down. In this way, water comes into play. The taste of water is a new flavor that is being explored in science and is interesting as a theme as well in that it changes form based on temperature.

Addressing the theme of nationalism, the iteration continues to be an extension of the original pretext with an emphasis on the contradiction between the national standard and what is real in the varied geographical landscapes around which national borders are drawn. Also, the theme of water is one that has a large influence on identity, both personally and politically. National borders are fought for and determined around water. Individuals are composed almost entirely of water and require access to water for many of their needs such as hydration of their bodies as well as for cultivating and harvesting food and materials for clothing, tools, and shelter. Water is absolutely essential to survival of living beings and is a bridge between animals and humans, and from human to human in many ways such as transportation and cultural traditions.

The theme of water is explored in "Portraits - Dendritic" in the way that it behaves and assists in the ongoing narrative thread of "Portraits". Once the previous

burning was doused by water, we were left with just cooling water. When the water cools enough, it becomes ice and spreads into dendritic, or crystalline formation.

Due to the sense of taste being a sense that is influenced strongly by the other senses of smell and touch, for the performative iteration, I created a glass crystal representing a water crystal. The glass sculpture continued the narrative in that it had some of the previous "Portraits - Captions" transparencies adhered to it so that the platforms relational refractions could become apparent. In this way, "the Text achieves, if not the transience of social relations, that at least of language relations: the Text is that space where no language has a hold over any other, where languages circulate (keeping the circular sense of the term) (Barthes, 1977). The dendritic formation is a branching form. It extends the traces of the clarity obtained by the cleansing of the previous convoluted lens by which the social landscape captured in the original "Portraits - Sketches" was generated.

The previous lens cultivated a hierarchical view and generation of society with its flawed structures. The term, 'dendritic' means 'branched like a tree' and comes from the Greek root word, 'dendron'. This frozen 'tree' is the dormant form of the next phase of life. It is the performative expression of an incubation period after which, hopefully a new more realized form can be cultivated.

Next I will give a brief note on the media that I will deliver these pieces discussed in Chapter 3. The question of what media and what form to use in passing these art works across time and space to an audience removed from the performances is an involved one. Various medias were involved in the actual performances and in the documentation,

whether, for instance, this work left material traces, was centralized around an object, or was recorded as a DVD of sound and/or video art, documentary photographs, or video is a choice I had to make for each piece. As is stated by Amelia Jones in, *Performing the Sentence - Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, there is a "long history of methods of securing representations or documents of ephemeral act (performance art, but also theater, dance, music, and one could even think of painting this way via Jackson Pollock turning painting into what appeared to be the record of an action) which are more durable or (as in this case) extendable beyond the space in which they are taking place" (Thun-Hohenstein, 2014) This addresses the question of contemporary practice in the field and how to go about framing and communicating it to audiences. This inquiry into "how performance art is presented and represented as well as how it is historicized... is one of the most complex questions facing the visual and performing arts, which are now at least partially in dialogue with the art world's current fascination with "live art" (Thun-Hohenstein, p.61). My "Portraits" series is a series of portraits with a fragmented subject presence due to the senses not being experiences all at once, but rather in a sequence of pieces, each emphasizing one of the five senses. The pieces are an extended presence of a subject over a stretched temporal swath in order to create an aesthetic history of the performance of the pre-text.

The material I am including along with this analysis varies between levels of the actual work of art and the recording of the work. As in Thun-Hohenstein's exhibition, "Material Traces: Time and the Gesture in Contemporary Art" at the Leonard and Vina Ellen Gallery at Concordia University in Montreal February through April 2013, there is a "hinge between the artist's action or labor in the process of making versus the made or

representational object" (Thun-Hohenstein, 2014). My series and the work I am including is like Thun-Hohenstein's notion of "a different way of theorizing art and performance on a continuum - after all, all works of art and performance (and performative art) involve *making*" (Thun-Hohenstein, 2014). In this way, the work is more integrated into the social fabric and participates in a endeavor that is less hierarchical and the material is more about "focusing on what is actually happening" on the continuum in terms of the production of the art and the social impact of the making of the art and art objects.

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Appendix - Interviews

Kevin Killian - August 18, 2012

Q:

1) How did your involvement as a seminal figure in San Francisco poetry, and specifically poets theater, take shape? & how has the scene evolved since your initial involvement?

2) Would you say that your main emphasis is in the field of Poets Theater?

3) You stated that while "a poetic play is one that is a hybrid, part play, and part poem, like the old masques...., a work of Poets Theater is a play written by a poet." How do you feel your works, including "The Big Keep" and your collaborative piece with Leslie Scalapino, "Stone Marmalade" as well as your recent production of "Box of Rain" reflected the field of poets theater?

4) How do you see the relationship between the creative works and the social and artistic movements from out of which they emerge as being at play in regards to Poets Theater?

5) Where do you see Poets Theater going and what are what are your plans from within it now after having co-edited and released *The Kenning Anthology of Poets Theater 1945-1985*?

A:

I came to the Bay Area in 1980, with the Language movement in full swing. As you know, the Language poets had turned the Poets Theater into a showcase for their own brilliant, if sometimes obscure plays, aided by the superior direction of Eileen Corder and Nick Robinson, the dual Diaghilevs of the movement. I was able to take part in the very last plays written during the very last bit of this nouvelle vague, and wound up somehow playing the leading man, an archaeologist, in *Fist of the Colossus*, a collaboration between local poets Carla Harryman and Tom Mandel. It was super fun but I remember thinking, I'm more likely to get more parts if I

write my own plays, since the DIY nature of Poets Theater encourages this brand of independence and Emersonian self-reliance. I may not be as good as they are, but I'll be me!

So I composed my first full-length play. "That" was probably (in my mind at least) a reply or a counter to the poetics embodied in Barrett Watten's magazine, "This." As in *Fist of the Colossus*, Eileen Corder and I played a married couple caught in the sinister undercurrent of neoliberal globalism. I was "Paul" and she was "Jane" and the conceit was, we were on the one hand, Paul and Jane Bowles, and on the other, we were Paul McCartney and Jane Asher, both couples considerably before your time, Elizabeth! Though it was a hit, I took my time crafting a successor, and it wasn't until five years later that my second took the stage. Since then I haven't stopped and I've written steadily, often for a large cast, for the SF Poets Theater is now a volunteer cadre of artists of all persuasions who come together for site-specific events, usually only one performance per play. We are comprised of poets, painters, filmmakers, musicians, curators, critics, artists, Hardly ever actors, actors don't understand the amateurism of our theater.

2. I'm not a playwright per se, really I'm a novelist with two feet in the poetry world.

3. I have written often with others, including my work with Leslie Scalapino on *Stone Marmalade*, the title of which came to her in a dream, so she added a subtitle to explain, and the subtitle was, "The Dreamed Title." I enjoy expanding my reach by writing with others, even and maybe especially the privatest of writers, for writing is traditionally a solo practice, though in the theater it's like everyone on stage is actually writing together under some weird communal durational spell.

*4. The creative work and the social and artistic movements from which they spring go hand in hand in my mind. Not only, I think, in agitprop like "The Big Keep," a piece which Anne Waldman asked me to write in order to carry a specific message, and to raise money for a specific cause, but like every other communal activity poets theater has its own politics and its own platform. I started writing these plays when Reagan was still in office and when AIDS was sweeping away all the brightness and the sweetness in the world. I've never stopped listening to the one tiny pulse in my body that plays to a progressive, even radical drum.

*5. Where is Poets Theater going? I hope it continues to make its mark. I want every poet to write a play, not just we extroverts and we exhibitionists. The move toward the stage is like a continual, lifelong coming out, it frees you on every level and at the same time redoubles one's attention to one's own craft, all the better to triumph over it.

Reed Bye - October 20, 2010

1) How would you describe the history of and your immersion as a seminal figure within the poetry scene in the U.S.?

Response:

First, I am certainly not a seminal figure in the U.S. poetry scene in any sense, but I have been the lucky beneficiary of direct exposure to the poetry, poetics, and teaching of a number of such figures. I have been fortunate to have found myself in a place (Boulder CO and Naropa University) that has been a nexus within this postmodern U.S. poetic activity.

2) You've written in many forms including your work entitled, "Bony Handed", from *Join the Planets*, which would fall under the genre or form of the poetic play. You've also cited Gertrude Stein as the "earliest single influence on what we at Naropa anyway have been calling poet's or poetic plays, ones that aren't specifically written for characters in any kind of realistic performance. It is slippery and, like all genres, Modernists took them up and turned them in new ways." Where, as you said, "Yeats and Beckett and Pirandello are certainly in this line, and many others," as well as, "in terms of chronology, Stein's more or less mid-career work with the dialogic "play" form where "things" (mental or physical or linguistic) talk with each other as a way of poetic composition is an early 'very radical' body of work in this form."

How do you see your work as reflective of the form of the poetic play?

Response:

I see a very "lively," as Stein used the word, dimension to the act of dialogic writing, that is, of literary work that engages interactive voices in its composition. Because of this format within the mind of the writing, a good deal of unpredictability is sown into the composition that can take spontaneous and unplanned directions. This vocal interactivity does not necessarily manifest as a drama within a presumed world external to the language events themselves (though it could), but more simply as dimensions and differences within vocal exchange itself, primarily inside of, not outside, the "dialogue." Tuning into intervals of linguistic exchange with its inevitable if subtle sense of "vocality" and "personality" but without an exterior world being summoned, can create a kind of tonal rhythm with the work, and be a delightful context for composition, i.e. writing, as well as performance.

3) Do you see any difference between the poetic play and poets theater?

Response:

Yes, this question follows well from the one before. There are all kinds of possibilities for composition of a dialogic text that don't suggest "people" interacting together in a particular physical and emotional environment. The most obvious of these is the presentation of interior mental and/or linguistic environments (Beckett perhaps the best example) in contrast to, or in combination with, exteriorized scenes and environments, and this raises questions of actual and assumed aspects of reality between the interior and external modes, and all the degrees possible in between them.

"Poetic plays" don't necessarily intend or lead to social performances, though of course they could be taken in that direction.

4) How do you see the poetic play taking shape? Where do you see it going amongst other textual and otherwise artistic forms and social and artistic movements?

Response:

There are infinite possibilities for "poetic play" including these vocal elements in which dramatic exchange can occur between animals, inanimate objects, ideas, elements, emotions, and linguistic entities rather than externalized human "characters." It could also incorporate intertextual dialogic exchange of words and lines from other poems or idioms or other kinds of overtly or dimly recognizable "quotation."

Anselm Berrigan - February 1, 2013

Here are four questions:

1) You have a long standing involvement in the field of poetry. Could you describe a bit of your experience?

I've been writing poetry since I was nearly nineteen, so about twenty-one years going forward. I was raised by poets - my mother, father, and stepfather all being or having been poets -- and my brother Edmund is a poet as well (and my older half-brother David also writes now, though that's a recent development). So years before I started writing I was brought into an environment suffused with poetry and the living of life as having poetry very near the center of things. I didn't think to write, however, until I was on my own and started doing student journalism in college, which led to writing fiction, which led to keeping a notebook, which led to breaking a line one day instead of making a sentence, and that was that. Along with writing and publishing I've been involved with magazine editing, book editing, and curating and hosting reading series -- I worked at The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church for a number of years in various capacities, including organizing and hosting the weekly Monday night series for younger writers for two years, and the weekly Wednesday Night Series (the centerpiece of the Poetry Project's programming) for four years. So I've been exposed to a great deal of readings and text-based performances of some variety.

(note: if it's relevant for me to add more to the above, I can)

2) You mentioned having written at least a few pieces that might fall under the general area of performative texts, namely, your "A Page Torn Out", "Gladiola Wipeout", and "To Be Hung in Paris". Would you say that these texts might have characteristics or tendencies that lend them toward more specific genres or forms?

Well, all three of the pieces you've mentioned are plays, of a kind.... poem-plays, I guess. "A Page Torn Out" is probably a poem-play, in that it can function as a poem as well as an extremely brief play -- it was staged once at the Ontological Theater in New York as part of a weekend series of plays written by poets, so it can be done -- I'd generally thought of it as unstageable, but I've read it dozens of times and it has almost always been a real active hit with audiences, mainly, I think, because it reads very fluidly as a shaped piece that happens to be dressed up as a play. I wrote it at a time when I was imagining

everything I was writing - all poems -- as having to be able to be, to my mind, able to be staged on the back of a wagon that could be pulled from town to town, a la the old medieval miracle plays. So in that sense, I was interested in any poem as a performative text, and still am -- although there's a difference between expecting something to work in performance as a read piece (I expect that of every piece I write) and imagining a poem being played out on a stage, however transient.

"Gladiola Wipeout" is a collaborative play that I wrote with the poet John Coletti. We traded parts, sections of acts, across four acts -- so we weren't going line by line, but handing each other, say, 8-12 lines worth of material that might include stage directions, new characters, deep slants away from whatever kinds of actions were being narrated or semi-narrated. It was a move away from standard poetic collaborations that John and I had been exposed to (and which I've never been terribly interested in doing, speaking for myself), in part because we had to deal with the pretense of it being staged, but we'd do everything we could to make that be impossible -- though I think the piece would be terrific if animated. In this case someone asked us to write a play, so when I say "the pretense of it being staged" I mean that we began thinking that it might actually happen. But I think we pretty quickly realized we were way off track on that end. We gave this play and a few others written by friends to the playwright who asked for them, and then we never saw him again!

"To Be Hung in Paris" was written collaboratively by my mother Alice Notley, my late stepfather Douglas Oliver, my brother Edmund, and myself. We had a lot of fun, and worked in a similar vein to the way that John and I worked on Gladiola Wipeout, although I think we wrote about a half-page each in the case of To Be Hung in Paris. To Be Hung in Paris is kind of terrible. I don't think we could ever publish it, but it was a riot to write. A certain amount of wine was involved, and my mom was somewhat annoyed with the whole endeavor and let that show. I think I ended it by making a character sing a verse from Emotional Rescue by The Rolling Stones.

Actually, I just looked at Gladiola Wipeout again, and now think it's pretty good, again. I go back and forth. But looking at it, I can see that there is a ton of unacknowledged appropriation going on. Some of it is obvious -- there's a whole bunch of quotations from Peanuts' characters that we must have taken from a Charlie Brown book (by Charles Schulz, natch). But there's some Kerouac from his short story "The Railroad Earth", and there's a whole poem by Doug Oliver -- his poem "For Kind" -- that's recited at the end by a mechanic named Cosmo who is possessed by the ghost of an unfortunate goldfish. I think we put that in there to cheer up Doug, who was battling cancer at the time. I've also always kind of liked the idea of getting out of a piece by using a really crass and unattributed bit of plagiarism.

This is reminding me of the existence of a piece I wrote around 1996 or 1997, a four-act play called *Intermission: The Autobiography of Katy Lederer*. I don't have it typed up, and will have to go home and dig out a copy of it, but I'm pretty sure I wrote it for this symposium at the poetry project on Identity and Invention, that must have happened one of those years. 1997, I think. I had five minutes to read, and decided it would be fun to read a play that claimed to be someone else's autobiography -- which makes me think I wrote it to be read as a play that was really a poem.... in which case it's an unconscious precedent for *The Page Torn Out*.

I think these pieces finally exist as a kind of singular genre of the play that is not so secretly a poem and really meant to be performed as a piece read by a single voice, wherein that voice has to take care of all the action.... which makes tone, projection, pacing, rapid changes in content, and a loose prosody more important than the visual presentation of a performance. Which is why they are so related to poems. I wonder if that's an invented category? I was reading plays by Frank O'Hara and Kenneth Koch when I wrote *The Page Torn Out*, but I wasn't interested in doing what they were doing. They seemed to be operating out of an idea of avant garde theater. I couldn't have done that. A combination of very limited knowledge of that kind of theater plus no desire to pretend I was really writing a play. But I liked the idea of the costume of a play, I guess, so there's that. *The Page Torn Out*, incidentally, has a lot to do with a memory of seeing the movie *Spartacus* when I was about nine.

3) You cited your Stepfather, Douglas Oliver as having defined "performance" in a letter to you as "the writing of the piece, the oral presentation of the piece, and the reading of the piece to oneself," and in this way he brought the voice you might hear in your head as you read into the performance of the piece itself.
How do you feel text and performance behave in your work?

That's a hard question to answer. Some of my answer to the previous questions probably take care of a bit of a possible answer. From early on I was interested in an active voicing performing itself and performing its changes at the center of my work. I wouldn't have put it that way when I was nineteen or twenty or even thirty, but it was always there as something I sensed internally and worked out in other terms. In most basic terms, I've always demanded of my work that it be able to work out loud and on the page. You can sub in as text and performance, I suppose, but now, for me, it's all wrapped up together. When I sit alone and generate material I'm putting that material to work - making it perform. The material fucks with my imagination and gets fucked with in return. But all that is just talk, in a way, too. Looking for forms, looking for structures that can enable that interplay, challenging myself and my sense of practice to evolve, dramatically and physically, and maintaining an open door to the harsh realities of reality via words and

what they do..... that's an on-going process of particulars and strategies that all have to be lived. And on the outskirts of it I have to be able to sit down and go. Which is still writing at its most productive level, for me (I know it's not that way for many others, and I have no truck with that; the variations on method and practice are always interesting in me, especially since if I know someone is handling a particular territory very well I don't have to worry about it being handled, so to speak, and I can do whatever it is I'm doing.....).

If it's useful to think of lineage, I'd have to say my sense of text and performance has been informed by Dickinson and Kerouac, Mayakovsky as received through O'Hara and Schuyler ("the intimate yell" being something said by Schuyler about Mayakovsky -- just imagining the levels of what that could be was almost enough for me to go on at a certain point), growing up in New York City and listening to a lot of rap music at certain points, stand up comedians, the noise rock of Sonic Youth, & then very heavily the writing of my family members, who are all or were powerful performers in very different ways. Baraka has been important as well, and hearing Harryette Mullen read from her long poem *Muse and Drudge* in San Francisco in 1995, I think, blew some doors open for me. I hear all these people read in my head and want to make something that can be that active and lively and ranging and sharp and amused and on and on.... in someone else's mind space. Or I've had those feelings intensely around a lot of that work and the work of others.

And as I mentioned earlier, curating readings -- I really have picked up a great deal from readings good and bad. Anyone who can sync their cadences -- vocal, textual, internal, imagined -- and bring their work to the room is going to be of serious interest to me. You can be a relatively quiet poet and control a room through giving voice to your work. How each person does that is the big question. Joanne Kyger gave a reading in New York about a year ago that really floored me because her work seemed to be outwardly operating on at least three different levels at once, and she was fluidly in control of all of them: she had the micro-work, the prosody, aligned with what was being given as content semantically through an on-going speech structure that varied and varied and sounded like "her" but mainly sounded like the poetry living all its levels, as if there was no surface. I'm not getting that completely right, but maybe you can get the gist of it.

Giving readings has taught me more about these things than anything else, finally. I'll read work that isn't done yet to find out things about it, but I have to know on some level that even if not exactly finished I can deliver the work to the room and get everybody inside it - the work and my remaking of the room into a different kind of space for that short while. Fred Moten asked the question in an interview (he was being interviewed) "where does the performance go?" & that's a fascinating question for me as well. His work, especially in B. Jenkins, has been something I've been living with intently the past few years.

4) In discussing forms, you described the "poetic play" or "poet's play as being possibly "more in line with independent (single) writers taking on the play as an explosive imaginative form in which things could be done quickly through dialogue and characterization and setting wherein the structure was much more to the point than the idea of actually staging the work." Regarding "poets theater", you stated that it "is a term more specific to plays written, produced, directed, and even performed by poets in an organized fashion, as a way to spread out and take on performance and theater through a poetry or poetics-driven manner of dramatic writing."

How do you see these two forms evolving within the fields of poetry and art?

I'm probably not quite the right person to ask about this as a point of evolution -- someone like Kevin Killian would have more insights on that, as he's attended, written, directed, and performed these things for years.... there is a poets' theater weekend that happens every year in the bay area, and right now poets' theater doesn't happen with that kind of frequency in new york, though it's been an on and off phenomenon in new york for decades. A writer like Corina Copp is someone who does playwriting and writes poetry, and seems to have a sense of the two as part of a single practice wherein the genres overlap and inform one another. For my part, when I've used the play form it's been about having a different filter to run words and their stresses through, and I get a looser sense of speech to work with -- so irreverence comes easy and I don't have to think about dealing with my own speech patterns and their relationship to syntax with as much particularity - partially because of the increased (for me) constraints of the play structure. I should say "play". When I'm working on poetry the matters of stress and pause and diction, which for me are happening on micro-levels which require me to always be "on" (although often being "on" is wrapped up with figuring out how to clear space in my mind so as to begin from something like nowhere. That may be a bit of a tangential point, but I didn't make the decision to continue to write pieces like "The Page Torn Out". I made the decision to let that be the one. I might revisit that decision, but I tend to be restless when it comes to poetic forms. What I do not know, is the extent to which poets are using the poetic play form, or variations on it like, I guess, Toscano's radio plays, to push their writing past their own self-designed limits with any regularity. A lot of poets' theater material, from a distance, looks momentary for the people involved - well, more than momentary, but occasional to the call for materials as opposed to part of an on-going drive inside their practices. But I could be wrong. Copp and Toscano seem interested, to me, in prosody regardless of where its found -- meaning they find it where language is being shaped for use. They might not each refer to the term prosody (I mean, they might, I just don't know), but they are both working at the level of the stress in their writing, generally speaking. Copp is probably more influenced by experimental theater and its lineages such as she's found them than Toscano, as Copp has studied with playwrights and had her works performed by theater groups around New York. I tend to focus on individuals I'm interested in, and those are two. The evolution of poets theater and poetic plays is chaotic, I think, and probably relative unmapped. The location of an active and expansive prosody inside of poetic writing that isn't necessarily "only" poetry is interesting to me, but it's pretty rare. Some conceptual writing can go there, I suppose, but to do so would require shedding much of the rhetoric conceptualists find so necessary to

generate on their own behalfs. Caroline Bergvall goes there, but I think of conceptual writing as too constraining a term for her work. But that's another side note -- this may all be side notes.

Vanessa Place - September 11, 2012

Here are seven questions:

1) Do you see yourself as a Conceptual Writer?

This is interesting: who am I to decide?

2) Who's work would you name as major influences in developing your ideas of Conceptual Writing?

Kenneth Goldsmith, Robert Fitterman, Marcel Duchamp, Lee Lozano, Hannah Darboven, Andy Warhol, Carolyn Walker Bynum, Sherrie Levine, Kim Rosenfield, Jacques Lacan. At this time.

3) Would you say your work is more toward the Baroque or the Pure Appropriation in terms of the spectrum you laid out in your *Notes on Conceptualisms*?

Yes.

4) When you said you saw hybridity as lying along that spectrum (between the Baroque and Pure Appropriation), what did you mean specifically?

Did I say that? I imagine I meant that the hybrid is necessarily a compound monster, whereas the baroque and pure appropriation are at further ends of the spectrum. Now I'm not sure if there is a spectrum, or just a field.

...When you say that the goal in Conceptual Writing is failure, the broken promise or "reneging of the faithful execution of the initial concept", which leads to 'hybrid or "impure" conceptualism or post-conceptualist writing', are you saying that hybridity is the goal of Conceptualist Writing? Or, in other words, what lies beyond Conceptual Writing? Is Hybrid Writing the next phase? A furthering of method?

Hybridity has always been with us, don't you think? The danger is that in the rush to amalgamate, we simply assimilate. There is no goal of conceptual writing: we are where we would be.

5) How would you define "Hybridity"?

In the original sense, a combine of species with allegorical properties. Often partially human, partially nonhuman.

6) Which Hybrid forms do you recognize?

Name some, and I'll tell you.

7) Can Hybrid forms be, or contain, Conceptual Writing?

What can't they contain? What can't they be? That is the very definition--and temptation--of the hybrid.

Here is an eighth:

What is the difference between a copy and an imitation?

Fiona Templeton - May 22, 2013 - Transcription

This is the 22nd of May, 2013. I am in London at La Muse with Fiona Templeton. We're going to have a conversation.

E: So I wanted to just ask, Fiona, ask you a few questions about Poets Theater, and maybe I could just start with the first question, if that's alright?

F: Mhm, yes.

E: Ok. Well, I just thought I should ask you, to begin with, whether you consider yourself to be a practitioner in the field of Poets Theater?

F: Well, that depends on if you spell them with capital 'P's and 'T's because I think there's - the term 'Poets Theater' is - I think there's both a generic idea of what that could be, in other words, theater by a poet, or there's a kind of local idea, which is the San Francisco, mostly San Francisco based, certainly United States based, movement of people who are poets who make theater, but within a certain aesthetic set of criteria, and I've had some issues with some of what those criteria are. And I think they're only expressed by certain people. I think there are other people who don't necessarily stick to them, but one of them is a kind of deliberate amateurism in performance. And I don't see why that - I actually don't see what that's got to do with poets making theater. I think some of the idea is that you don't need the production material to make or to present performatively, but I think if you deliberately do that it may kind of be working against the best interests of some of the work. I think it suits some work to be kind of presented in a kind of 'tongue in cheek, I'm not really doing this sort of way', but that only, I think suits a kind of limited spectrum of the work. And as far as whether that's what I do, that second type, that kind of very specifically aesthetically limited type is not what I do because I actually think that theatrical presentation, performative presentation can bring out the qualities of poetry that I really like such as its existence in the ear.

*****3:03*****

*I am in the process of transcribing hours of this interview's audio recording which addresses the following questions:

1) Would you consider yourself a practitioner in the field of Poets Theater?

2) How do you see Poets Theater? What would you say it is?

3) How did Poets Theater begin? Who would you say started it? Would you or the people you've been involved with in Poets Theater regard Marry Manning as the founder of the movement, platform, or genre?

4) What was Poets Theater when you initially became involved?

5) How would you say you are involved in Poets Theater?

6) How did your involvement take shape? How does Poets Theater relate to your work?

7) How do you see the relationship between the creative works and the social and artistic movements from out of which they emerge as being at play in regards to Poets Theater?

8) Would you say the field of Poets Theater has changed and evolved since your initial involvement? How so?

9) How do you think the terms 'Poets Theatre' and 'Cross-genre' relate? Would you call a work of Poets Theatre a Cross-genre work? Do you see the terms as synonymous or different? How so?

